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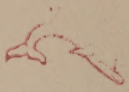

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THE

METHOD OF SHAKESPEARE

AS AN ARTIST,

DEDUCED FROM AN ANALYSIS OF HIS LEADING TRAGEDIES AND COMEDIES.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

It is, perhaps, the most remarkable fact in the history of literature, that the plays of Shakespeare, now acknowledged by all competent judges to be consummate masterpieces of dramatic art, should for a period of two hundred years, in his own land — a land of poets, wits, scholars, and men of letters — have been considered the works of a man of genius, it is true, but a genius ignorant of the commonest principles of dramatic composition. That such an opinion should have obtained for so long a time can be attributed only to Shakespeare's greatness and originality as an artist. Out of the chaos of the old English stage he created a new dramatic world, having its own independent and peculiar laws; but as these laws were so profound and novel that they remained concealed, the beauty and order which resulted from them were also unrecognized; and the plays were looked upon as rude, abnormal, and even barbarous. No writer ever practiced the art of concealing art with so much success as Shakespeare. Though the most elaborate of artists, he has ever been held the poet of nature. In fact, he started two and a half centuries ahead of his

critics, and the study by them of his works for that period of time has scarcely sufficed to bring them up abreast with him. At the time he wrote, the three unities were considered indispensable to excellence in dramatic composition. These unities, or more particularly those of time and place, Shakespeare brushed aside without hesitation or scruple; he went even further, and in two plays — "Cymbeline" and "Winter's Tale" — he threw down the glove to Aristotle, and showed that by his own more profound and subtile method, he could transmute the violation of the unities of time and place into an organizing principle that should give unity of effect to a play. So bold a disregard of rules, which had ever been held essential, could be ascribed, by even his most enthusiastic admirers, only to ignorance and want of taste. While lauded, therefore, for his native strokes of genius, and his unrivaled power in isolated scenes and passages, he was thought incapable of producing an æsthetic whole. As an instance of the superficial criticism that prevailed throughout the Eighteenth Century, the opinion of Dr. Johnson upon the beautiful and wonderfully-constructed play of "Cymbeline" may be cited. The learned commentator, after remarking that the play contains "some just sentiments, some natural dialogue, and some pleasing scenes," adds that, to comment on its incongruities "were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross

for aggravation!" Little did the critic suspect that that same play is an ideal of a chronicle-history, and that it exemplifies the principles of all written history, as an art. It seems never to have occurred to the followers of "the classic school" that the Greeks had not exhausted all the forms of ideal representation; that a new civilization must needs find reflection in a new genus of drama; and that the lawless Shakespeare, in the conscious strength of his genius, might say with another famous outlaw: —

> "Of old things all are over old;
> Of good things none are good enough;
> We'll show that we can help to frame
> A world of other stuff."

On the contrary, incapable of conceiving any greatness or excellence higher than their own standard, the upholders of the narrow and pedantic rules derived from a drama which had existed two thousand years before, applied their diminutive ell-wands to the colossus, and finding that he greatly exceeded the measure, at once commenced hewing him down to proper dimensions. This process gave a grateful world a score or two of *improvements* and *alterations*, some of which still hold possession of the stage to the exclusion of the originals. And, notwithstanding the flood of light which modern criticism has shed upon the structure of Shakespeare's plays, it may be safely asserted that even at this day we are far from duly estimating the breadth and

depth of the foundations on which he erected his drama, or the skill and ingenuity with which he executed his conceptions.

It has been made a question whether Shakespeare wrote with a moral purpose; and this question has divided Shakespearian criticism into two schools; one, the German, which maintains that in each one of his plays Shakespeare had a moral aim, a central thought, which pervades the whole play, and gives it its organic form; the other, the English, comprising a great number of eminent and eloquent writers, both in England and America, who deride this notion of cramping the genius of Shakespeare within the narrow limits of a rule as little less ridiculous than an attempt to measure the ocean with a gauger's rod, and who contend that his plays are organic through the spontaneous exercise of an instinctive sense of beauty, harmony, and fitness. Of these two schools, the German is the more profound with regard to the philosophy of the plays; the English, the more keenly alive to their beauty and grandeur as poetic creations. Of the direct inculcation of morality there is scarce a vestige in Shakespeare; for, although his plays are based on moral ideas, yet such ideas in their formal and abstract statement are precisely what the poet obtrudes as little as possible upon our notice. They are inwoven into the characters, the incidents, into every part of the play; they form the back-ground of the piece, and throw the picture into high relief, but gener-

ally receive their most direct embodiment in the heroines, — such as Portia, Imogen, Miranda, Cordelia, and others; whence the exceeding moral beauty and loveliness of these characters. But whatever moral influence a play exercises, such influence is felt only in the general impression the piece produces. In one play only, — "Troilus and Cressida" — is there anything like an intentional teaching of morality; and this, solely because the notions of moral instruction and the reformation of the mind and manners are implicated in the fundamental idea of that extraordinary drama. Admitting, then, that Shakespeare was careless of the moral effect of his works, and that he wrote only to make money, still to attain this end it was necessary that he should produce a good play; and to do this in any high degree of excellence is very nearly equivalent to writing with a moral purpose. For a play is a work of art, which represents human life and action, and like all works of art must possess organic unity, that is, all its parts must be necessary to constitute it a perfect whole, and the spirit and force of the whole must be found in every part. This can be effected only by its being an evolution of an inward principle, the development of an organic idea. On the other hand, as a representation of life and character, a play must possess truth to nature in motive and act, and its truth will be commensurate with its moral depth. All human life and action are moral and subject to rule, and

consequently, when reflected in the dramatic mirror, must be founded on a moral idea; and, since it is impossible to depict the whole extent of man's nature in any one play, such idea can be no other than that special rule prescribed by the reason for the conduct of the characters, in the particular circle of relations or sphere of life of which the play is a projection. And the truth of the work, as a reflection of life and action, will depend upon the profundity with which the creative genius of the poet draws his characters, so that the whole action of the piece springs from the observance or violation of this rule by a necessity of their moral natures; while the unity of the piece will depend upon the skill with which he uses the same idea as an organizing principle to draw all parts of the work into harmony. The law of each play will therefore be determined by its subject or the relations represented in it. Such relations are as manifold as man's desires, passions, and pursuits, and the rule of reason or self-government, though always essentially the same, assumes as many names and phases as there are forms of human duty or error. According as man is portrayed in relation to the great interests and ends of life, such as the State, society, family, politics, literature, science, fortune, riches, commerce, war, fame, and others, — and Shakespeare adopts even man's relations to space and time as subjects for his drama, — he will be amenable to that branch of the moral law more

particularly applicable to his action under the special relations depicted. Plays thus constructed would have the same effect as if written with a direct moral purpose; they would each present a special aspect of life, and inculcate a special class of duties; and such, whether designedly or not, are the plays of Shakespeare.

But these laws cannot be adequately expressed in any brief formula, maxim, or aphorism; they require to be set forth at length, with all their related thoughts and corollaries. An organic principle of a play is less an idea than a moral scheme, which embraces some great province of human life, thought, and duty, and will generally be found to underlie some one or other of the most important interests and concerns of humanity. Each play is an independent world, revolving in an orbit of its own; and the view of things it gives we can imagine as existing entirely distinct from any other phase of life; in fact, while we live in it and breathe its moral atmosphere, it is for us the world itself. Yet the representation is always partial and one-sided, and however comprehensive may be its scope, it is always taken from a single point of view. Each piece, therefore, has its own peculiar tone, coloring, and effect. By what method is this effect produced? Take two strongly contrasted plays, for instance, "Twelfth Night" and "Hamlet," which are dramatic correlatives, and stand at opposite poles of the dramatic world; they both sink their foun-

dation so deep as to rest upon the same primary principle of temperance or self-restraint; yet they differ in effect as much as light differs from darkness. In "Twelfth Night," the rule is applied to the sensual appetites, and the indulgence of fancy, whereas in "Hamlet" it is applied to the exercise of the faculties of the soul and intellect. The abuse of the rule in the one leads to vice and folly, and the representation results in an ideal of Comedy; in the other, the abuse of the rule leads to sin and madness, and the representation results in an ideal of Tragedy. The one is gay, hilarious, and filled with animal enjoyment; the other, gloomy and mysterious, "shakes our dispositions with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." Each possesses a marvelous unity of effect and creates one total impression. Now, the problem is, whence is this unity derived, and by what means does the poet produce it? One school of criticism attributes it to the poet's working with a moral aim or purpose; the other school asserts that he had no purpose but that of producing a play that would fill the treasury of the "Globe," and his own pockets, and that the artistic perfection of his work proceeds only from his sense of congruity and harmony of effect. Perhaps the truth lies midway between these opinions, and that, although the plays are based upon moral ideas, such ideas are made use of by the dramatist, not with a moral, but with an æsthetic purpose, and as a necessity

of art. In endeavoring to solve this question, and ascertain what, if any, these ideas are, a hint may be taken from the method of science. As in the study of nature, the philosopher, in order to account for the relations that exist among certain phenomena, adopts a theory by which he attempts to explain the observed facts, and unite them in a system under one general law; so, in analyzing a play of Shakespeare with a view of ascertaining the cause of its moral unity, the critic may hypothetically adopt an idea as the organic principle of the piece; and if it can be shown that all its various and contrasted characters are but embodiments of some phase of this idea; that the incidents are illustrative of its operation as a law; that the poetry, imagery, metaphor, in one word, rhetoric, are moulded by it into peculiar forms, and that the vocabulary of the play will fall into groups and classes of words having significations analogous with the terms expressive of the leading notions involved in it as the scheme of the play, it is at least presumptive evidence that such idea is the law of the piece, which, if the poet had no direct intention of illustrating for its moral value, he at least made use of as a rule or guide to his own mind in order to impart unity to his composition. And if it be possible to go one step further and show that, with the illustration which the whole play affords of the idea as a moral truth, there is also wrapped up a hidden doctrine appertaining to art, or literature, or science, it will

go far to prove that Shakespeare even, though writing with the intent of producing a popular and paying play, did not dash off his dramas in a divine frenzy, but worked deliberately according to a plan; and that, either for the gratification of his own tastes, or out of the exuberance of his thought and the fullness of his art, he infolded in his plays certain esoteric doctrines, allusions, and meanings, which could have proceeded from no possible design of pleasing the public, as he knew that such meanings and allusions would be necessarily lost on the general audience and reader.

The truths, moreover, which form these organic laws, are those which lie at the bottom of all the business of our lives; they are our standards of judgment in all moral matters, and may be considered the wheels on which our minds revolve. They are, therefore, at once trite and profound. It is only in the story that Shakespeare's plays are romantic, picturesque, and out of common experience; in their real subject-matter, as developed in the characters and motives to action, they are of the very stuff of which our lives are wrought. But they so dazzle us with the splendor of their poetic forms, that we do not always readily perceive that the principles involved in the representation are those familiar truths on which we have acted all our lives, nor that we ourselves are in fact the heroes of the plays; Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, and others, being but illustrations on a gigantic scale of the same principles that have

governed our own conduct, or that of others falling under our observation, in the commonest transactions and intercourse of life. Few men, it may be, have ever felt it a duty, as Hamlet did, to avenge, by murder, a father's death, and none have so felt it under the commands of a father's ghost; but all men have endeavored to evade the obligations of duty by craft, and have framed false excuses for the indulgence of habit.

The sum of Shakespearian criticism thus far has been to establish the fact that the plays are organic. As the result of two and a half centuries of study, this statement looks very meagre, but it denotes a mighty stride from the criticism of the Eighteenth Century. It is a stride from chaos to order, from death to life. It moreover indicates the path of future effort. It is probable that knowledge of Shakespeare will, in future, be deepened and widened chiefly by the study of the structure of his pieces. As yet, no examination has been made of them sufficiently minute or detailed to reveal the wonderful ingenuity of their workmanship or the exquisite art of their style. This volume is an attempt to take one halting step in that direction. In it there is no endeavor to emulate the profound philosophical views of the great critics of any school; far less does it presume to expound the full scope and meaning of any play; it seeks only to suggest some of the methods used by Shakespeare to stamp unity upon his pieces as works of art; and in so doing

to point out the organic ideas of such plays as it treats of, not in the form of loose and general moral propositions, but as precise and definite rules of life, of universal application and absolute authority in the actions and affairs of men. And the attempt will be made to explain, however imperfectly, the mode in which these principles are embodied in the characters, illustrated in the incidents, and reflected in the metaphor and diction of the respective pieces. Shakespeare, out of all comparison, was the greatest master of language, style, and rhetoric in English, if not in all literature; and, at the same time, was the most rigorous observer of his own rules of composition. On every page of his works may be found the most curious and ingenious rhetorical artifices; and even in the wildest fury of passion, as in Lear or Othello, — or amid vollies of wit, as in Benedick and Beatrice — such is his unparalleled power over forms of expression, that without sacrificing one jot of dramatic effect or spontaneous and passionate utterance, he moulds every phrase methodically by the organic law of the piece.

And, in fact, the metaphor and diction of a play are the best test of the accuracy with which its true idea is hit upon. For what the foliage and fruit are to the tree, the metaphor and diction of these plays are to their fundamental ideas. As an oak is a forest of oaks, each bough, branch, limb, twig, and leaf being but a new development

of the original germinal principle, so a play of Shakespeare's is throughout all its parts but a reproduction of the organic idea even to the minutest points of phraseology and diction. And unless the principle alleged to be such idea can be found in the ultimate developments of the organism of the piece, the critic may safely conclude that there is an error in his analysis. On this account considerable space has been given in the following pages to a consideration of the vocabulary of the pieces, for, though this may prove of but little interest in itself, it will be found the best key for unlocking the more hidden and secret meanings and beauties of the plays.

However impracticable, or fanciful, or absurd this attempt to look into the poet's method of working may appear, it is supposed that it may not be altogether without interest to some readers; for, though the path will lead at times into the dry and barren region of abstract speculation, it will be found to terminate in a new domain of poetic beauty. It will, perhaps, give fresh force and a new interpretation to many old and familiar passages, and will impart significancy to many lines and words which now seem endowed with no special or latent meaning. To illustrate this in a few instances with regard to metaphor and diction, in which Shakespeare is considered by all a writer most free from the restriction of a rule, we meet with these lines in "The Merchant of Venice:" —

> " A day in April never came so sweet
> To show how *costly* summer was at hand," etc.

And we exclaim how felicitous is the epithet *costly*, as applied to summer! how Shakespearian! how expressive of the pomp and opulence of the season! but when we reflect that the play treats of material and moral values, and that a very large proportion of its diction is drawn from notions of *cost*, *value*, *bargain*, *sale*, etc., we perceive that the word *costly* was selected by the poet by no merely happy flash of fancy, but by deliberate and philosophic choice.

So, too, in " Hamlet " we admire Horatio's description of the cliff for its ease and naturalness : —

> " The very place puts *toys of desperation*
> *Without more motive into every brain*
> That looks so many fathoms to the sea
> And hears it roar beneath ; "

but upon considering that the theme of " Hamlet " is virtually the mind of man, and that the play deals largely with the causes that disturb its balance, we at once perceive a new beauty and an exceeding fitness in Horatio's describing the cliff by allusions to the effect its giddy height has in turning the brain and inspiring a mad impulse to leap off.

Or, again, in reading " Much Ado about Nothing," we find the description of the honey-suckle bower, where the poet, reversing the usual order of metaphor, which is from the immaterial to the

material, illustrates a purely natural object by a simile drawn from artificial manners : —

> " Where honey-suckles,
> Ripen'd by the sun, forbid the sun to enter,
> *Like favorites* made *proud by princes*, oppose
> That *pride* against *the power that bred it ;* "

but as soon as we remember that this play presents an ideal of artificial life, in which, to some degree, Art takes the place of Nature, and Nature of Art, we cannot too much admire the ingenuity and felicity of the poet, who thus goes to the morals of the court to illustrate an object of purely natural beauty.

And to take one more instance — in this case from " The Winter's Tale," where the old shepherd is likened to " a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns," we wonder at that affluence of fancy that can put before us the forlorn appearance of the old rustic in an image so novel and so graphic; but upon looking further, and finding that " The Winter's Tale " is based upon the idea that time repairs all wrongs and restores all rights, and that in accordance with this idea, the whole play is written over with phrases denoting the flight and passage of time, we perceive that when the poet compares the old man to " a weather-bitten conduit of *many kings' reigns*," something besides fancy had to do with the selection of the image. And thus, throughout these plays, every page sparkles with beauties unrevealed to the sight of those who are blind to the organic idea.

There are many readers of Shakespeare who, for want of time, or it may be, want of inclination to study, merely skim the surface of his works, and are quite content with the enjoyment which even the most cursory and superficial perusal must glean; but it is believed that if the hint is given to such readers of the deeper significancy that rests upon these works, they will at once perceive new beauties, and will detect, in what before seemed unsystematic and fortuitous, a wonderful harmony, coherence, and meaning. And if by the brief suggestions made in the following essays — and in others which perhaps will follow them — any reader of Shakespeare shall be enabled to take fresh pleasure in these works, or appreciate in any degree more fully the consummate skill of their construction, the aim of the writer will be attained.

A general acquaintance with the characters plots, and incidents of the plays is presupposed on the part of the reader.

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THE

METHOD OF SHAKESPEARE.

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL.

TWELFTH NIGHT is a model of pure and elegant comedy; it is more; it is a poetic and highly wrought ideal of the sensual side of man's nature, and, as such, is the quintessence of comedy. It takes for its organic idea a principle, which, in one form or another, lies at the bottom of all comic representation of life, — the domination of the sense over the reason, the subjection of the nobler faculties of man to his lower impulses and appetites. Temperance, self-government, the rule of fitness and reason, — these are in all things the eternal law, the violations of which make up the follies and immoralities, the vices and crimes, the sorrows and sufferings of human life. The supremacy of reason set aside, man is delivered over to the rule of caprice and impulse, and is rapidly hurried into excesses and errors, which, when they spring from the animal side of his nature and involve no deep depravity of heart, furnish the subject-matter of comedy

but when rising, under the influence of passions that have their root in the grandeur of the soul, into those great transgressions death alone can expiate, become the themes of tragedy. Thus Shakespearian comedy and tragedy are both outgrowths of the same stock, differing only in form and in the degrees with which they respectively manifest the working of the moral government of the world. They both alike illustrate that law of action and reaction which pervades the moral as well as the material world, and which inexorably demands that for every error there must be paid down an equivalent retribution.

Between the opposite ideals of life, as seen from the extreme tragic and comic points of view, there are many gradations; comedies so serious in tone, so dark in their delineations of character, so severe in their exhibition of retributive justice, that they touch the confines of tragedy; and on the other hand, tragedies, of which the issue of the action is so happy — the wicked only perishing, while the innocent escape — that they wear somewhat of the joyous coloring of comedy.

In "Twelfth Night," the fundamental principle of all comedy assumes its broadest form. Man necessarily becomes a jest "sacred to ridicule" and laughter, when, forgetting the dignity of his being and the high aims and destinies to which his spiritual faculties point, he gives himself up to the pursuit of pleasure, and enslaves both mind and soul in the service of his animal

cravings and appetites. Out of this subversion of his moral nature, this overthrow of reason by impulse, arise those follies and foibles, those vain and selfish ends, those inconsistencies and contradictions which furnish comedy with its intrigues, its plots, and cross purposes, that, like bubbles that meet in air, explode and neutralize each other, and hold up to laughter their common vanity and nothingness. The characters and sentiments, therefore, which spring from the gross and selfish propensities of man, his worldliness, appetites, fancies, self-interest, and love of pleasure, constitute the domain over which the Comic Muse reigns supreme. Deep into the very centre of this domain are sunk the foundations of "Twelfth Night," and on them is erected a superstructure of wit and poetry that glows with the gayest coloring of fancy. So purely comic is this play, that the moral idea that underlies the representation is scarce noted; and, in fact, it takes no higher form and refers to no higher power than man's own rationality or good sense; for in "Twelfth Night," man is represented in relation to beauty and pleasure, and subject, consequently, to the reason, which, as the ground of principles, furnishes the standard of taste or excellence, and imposes upon all indulgence in pleasure, of whatever quality or degree, the rule of modesty and decorum. This rule, while enjoining self-restraint and a respect for times and persons, points out also that the highest beauty and pleasure exist in the mind

and soul; the one being found in that which is morally fit and becoming; the other in the exercise of wit, fancy, invention, and discourse. From the observance of this rule and the cultivation of the intellectual tastes, have arisen the liberal arts — grammar, logic, rhetoric, eloquence, poetry, painting, music, in short, literature and the arts and accomplishments that embellish life. But these are not merely means of entertainment; they are effective instruments for persuasion and for moving the affections and the will, and even when cultivated for pastime, they impart that grace and elegance to the mind and manners, and that generosity to the sentiments, which are the basis of true gentility, while by their power of pleasing, they secure for their possessor credit, favor, and praise.

But wit and fancy, equally with the lower propensities of our nature, must be held within due bounds. Fancy, no less than appetite, when excited by the objects of the sense, breaks through all restraint, and runs into excesses which, as aberrations from the rule of reason, are but forms in varying degrees of folly and madness, while a too exuberant wit or invention frequently gratifies itself in jests and devices, which, by rudely sporting with the feelings of others, give the deepest offense and awaken the bitterest feelings of revenge. Such deviations from the standard of decorum are due to the excessive influence of those natural tastes and propensities which, aris-

ing from complexional peculiarities both of mind and body, constitute the *genius*[1] of individuals, and determine their pleasures and pursuits; and to the same inborn predilections are attributable those special preferences and sudden fancies — such as love at first sight — which seize the mind with overpowering force, and resist all efforts of reason to control them. Yet so gay and joyous is intended to be the effect of this holiday piece, that the penalties inflicted for the violation of this rule of reason are no more severe than self-reproaches at waste of time, or the torments and distractions of unsatisfied appetite, or the ridicule and mortification that attend on the exposure of vanity and selfishness. Throughout the play is exhibited the power of the sense to enthrall the reason; but more particularly is stress laid upon the pleasures of the eye to excite the fancy and captivate the mind. Personal beauty and the good gifts of nature are set forth as having a cer-

[1] The word "genius," now most generally used in the sense of original, creative mental power, signified in Elizabethan language the native bent of mind and disposition, — as in this play: "His very genius has taken the infection of the device, man." It was also used to signify the tutelar deity, on whom depended this particular turn of mind, and the consequent variety of character with which the world is filled. The classical reader will recall the lines of Horace: —

"Cur alter fratrum cessare, et ludere, et ungi
Præferat Herodis palmetis pinguibus; alter
Dives et importunus, ad umbram lucis ab ortu
Silvestrem, flammis et ferro mitiget agrum
Scit *genius*, natale comes qui temperet astrum,
Naturæ Deus humanæ, mortalis in unum
Quodque caput, vultu mutabilis, albus et ater."

tain witchcraft in them which throws a spell upon the mind of the beholder, and all the characters, with the exception of Viola, who represents the opposite principle, are types of self-abandonment; as well Olivia, avowing her passion for the handsome page, as Malvolio, indulging in day-dreams and practicing behavior in the sun; as well the elegant Orsino, stretched on beds of flowers and given over to love thoughts, as the debauched "Sir Toby," vociferating drunken ditties over midnight bowls of burnt sack.

The first notice of "Twelfth Night," of which any record is known, is that contained in the "Table Book" of John Manningham, student at law, who witnessed its representation on the feast of Candlemas, 1601, at the Middle Temple. It was probably written a year or two before. Though in its universality and general scope it belongs to no particular time, that is, it belongs to all times, yet its special form, structure, and title, notwithstanding the intrinsic connection of these with its subject-matter, make the inference a fair one that it was intended as a piece for the holidays. It is written in a spirit of license for a period of license, and depicts scenes of carousing and merriment for a season of revels and festivity. Illustrating the power of fancy to beguile the reason — and Shakespeare uses the word "fancy" not only as a synonyme for the imagination, but also for love and likings, excited

by what pleases the senses, and, in fact, for whims, desires, and humors of any kind — it trusts to the fancy for its effects. As the characters are governed by the influence of external shows, and know no law save their own will and pleasure, so in the outward world there is a correspondent order of things, and retributive justice works its ends through the illusions of the sense and the agency of chance. But Chance, however fickle a goddess, wears in "Twelfth Night" her most smiling aspect, and amid the general pleasure produced by happy incidents, brings about no result more serious than the discomfiture of Sir Toby and his companions, who, mischievously thinking that they might safely fasten a quarrel upon so gentle-looking a youth as the disguised Viola, are deceived by a *personal resemblance* and get their heads broken for their pains.

For the source of the plot we must go to Barnaby Riche, who, in 1581, published a collection of tales, which like numberless other fictions, written for the amusement of an hour, would long since have dropped into oblivion but for the fact that in one of them is found the germ so marvelously expanded into life and beauty in this play. The title of Riche's book with its pleonastic statement and punning Latin motto runs as follows: — "Riche his Farewell to Militarie profession, containing verie *pleasaunt discourses* fit for a *peaceable tyme*. Gathered together for

the *onely delight* of the *courteous Gentlewomen* bothe of England and Irelande, for whose *onely pleasure* thei were collected together, and unto whom thei are directed and dedicated by Barnaby Riche, Gentleman. *Malui me divitem esse quam vocari.*" Among these "discourses" there is one of "Apollonius and Sylla," the chief incidents of which were unquestionably used by Shakespeare in the construction of the more serious portion of the plot of "Twelfth Night." But in the introduction of this story, there are a few dry words of quite as much interest as the story itself, for they apparently suggested to the poet the organic idea of his piece.[1]

"There is no childe that is borne into this wretched worlde, but before it doeth sucke the mother's milke, it taketh first a soope of the cupp of errour, which maketh us when we come to riper years, not only to enter into actions of injurie but many tymes to straie from that is right and reason; but in all other thinges wherein wee shewe ourselves to bee most drunken with this poisoned cupp, it is in our actions of love; for the lover is so *estranged from that is right* and *wandereth so far from the boundes of reason*, that hee is not able to deeme white from blacke, good from badde, vertue from vice, but onely led by the *apetite of his owne affections*, and *groundyng them on* the *foolishnesse of his own fancies*, will so settle his lyking on such a one, as either by de-

[1] This is noted by Gervinus.

serte or unworthinesse will merite rather to be loathed than loved.

"If a question might be asked what is the ground indeede of *reasonable love*, whereby the knot is knit of true and perfect freendship? I thinke those that bee wise would answere *deserte;* that is, where the partee beloved doeth requite us with the like; for otherwise, if the *bare shewe of beautie* or the *comelinesse of personage* might be sufficient to confirme us in our love, those that be accustomed to goe to faires and marketes, might sometimes fall in love with twentie in a daye; *deserte* must then bee (of force) the *grounde of reasonable love;* for to *love them that hate us*, to *follow them that flie from us*, to *fawne on them that frowne on us*, to *currie favour with those that disdaine us*, to bee *glad to pleese* them that *care not how thei offende us*, who will not confesse this to be an *erroneous love*, neither *grounded upon witte nor reason.*"[1]

These commonplace reflections on "erroneous love" and the necessity of grounding our affections upon reason, rather than "the foolishness of our own fancies" — evidently suggestive of the characters of Olivia and Orsino — seem to have given Shakespeare the hint which he enlarged into a philosophical principle, universally applicable to the conduct of life, so far as life is viewed

[1] A verbal reminiscence of the last words of this passage is contained in the avowal of Olivia to the page:—

> "*I love thee so*, that maugre all thy pride,
> *Nor wit nor reason* can my passion hide."

in its relations to those shows of beauty, and other objects of the external world, that afford pleasure to the sense and excite fancy, appetite, and desire. It is the law of fitness and reason, under the special form of taste and judgment.

In his address to "readers in generall," Riche states that his stories are "*forged only for delight, neither credible to bee beleeved*, nor hurtful to be perused." They are confessedly *fictions* — and Shakespeare, therefore, in adopting one of them as the basis of a play, in which he intends to depict Man in reference to Pastime, and to illustrate the proper exercise of those faculties, on which his higher pleasures depend, and out of which grow the fine arts and polite literature, — including, of course, the drama, as *par excellence* that species of fiction devised for entertainment, — renders his comedy a dramatic ideal of a fiction. It is a play so written as always to seem a play, and the pleasure we derive from it is the same in kind as that which forms its theme. So delicately is it touched with incoherency, so finely improbable are its situations, so graceful the hyperbole of its dialogue, that we are never permitted to forget that we are in the world of romance. It is not only a comic representation of life, but it is also an ideal and exemplar of such representations. This fact has been felt, though not clearly perceived by critics who have censured the play in the same spirit, and almost the same language with which Fabian comments on the extravagant

conduct of Malvolio, — "If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction." And Dr. Johnson says of it, that "though well enough contrived to divert upon the stage, it wants credibility and fails to produce the proper instruction required in the drama, as it exhibits no just picture of life." Precisely so; but it presents an exquisite picture of life as seen in fiction, and this was the end the poet had in view. Nor does it fail to produce the instruction required in the drama, for it is grounded on a rule, of which Shakespeare himself has always been accused, until the days of modern criticism, of being profoundly ignorant, that imagination, including fancy, wit and invention — in one word, poetic genius — must in works of fiction be subordinated to taste and judgment, just as in real life the native biases of the mind, which stamp the genius and determine the tastes and pleasures of every individual, must be held in check by reason and be indulged with moderation and decency. From this teaching, also, this corollary follows, that the principles of a correct taste, if not identical, are at least analogous, with those of a pure morality. Virtue is beauty.

And so accurately at the centre of his subject does Shakespeare place his organic idea, or rather, with such creative power does he evolve his whole play from such idea, that the topics of the dialogue and the motives to the action are the very faculties which are illustrated in the interlocutors. The

characters are fanciful about fancy, witty about wit, fertile of devices that illustrate the power of fiction over the imagination, while they all recognize in the reason the ultimate test and standard of the propriety of their opinions and conduct. As an instance of the ease with which the dramatist, while carrying forward his plot and developing his characters, shapes the matter, and colors the diction of his scenes with the fundamental thought of the piece, the passage may be cited in which Sir Andrew, who, with a momentary gleam of good sense, has resolved to abandon the pursuit of Olivia, is diverted from his purpose and persuaded to challenge the page, by the fluent rhetoric and ready invention of Fabian and Sir Toby. The diction and phrases, that belong to the special vocabulary of the play, as determined by the organic idea, are italicized. Of this vocabulary, a brief analysis will be given further on.

" *Sir Andrew.* No, *faith*, I'll not stay a jot longer.

Sir Toby. Thy *reason*, dear venom, *give thy reason.*

Fabian. You *must needs yield your reason*, Sir Andrew.

Sir And. Marry, I saw your niece do more *favors* to the Duke's serving man than ever she *bestow'd* on me; I saw't i' the orchard.

Sir Toby. Did she see thee the while, old boy? tell me that.

Sir And. As plain as I see you now.

Sir Toby. This was a great *argument* of love in her toward you.

Sir And. 'Slight! will you make an *ass* o' me?

Fab. I will *prove* it legitimate, sir, upon the *oaths* of *judgment* and *reason.*

Sir Toby. And they have been grand-jurymen since before Noah was a sailor.

Fab. She did show *favor* to the youth in *your sight*, only to *exasperate* you, to awake your dormouse *valor*, to put fire in your *heart* and brimstone in your *liver*. You should then have accosted her; and with some *excellent jests*, fire-new from the mint, you should have bang'd the *youth* into *dumbness*. This was look'd for at your *hand* and this was balked. The double gilt of this opportunity you let time wash off, and you are now sail'd into the north of my lady's *opinion;* where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's *beard*, unless you do redeem it by some *laudable* attempt either of *valor* or policy.

Sir And. An 't be any way, it must be with *valor;* for policy I hate. I had as *lief* be a Brownist as a politician.

Sir Toby. Why, then, build me thy fortunes on the *basis* of *valor*. Challenge me the Count's *youth* to *fight* with him; *hurt* him in eleven places; my niece shall take note of it; and assure thyself, there is no love-broker in the world can more prevail in man's *commendation* with woman than report of *valor*.

Fab. There's no way but this, Sir Andrew.

Sir And. Will either of you bear me a challenge to him?

Sir Toby. Go, *write* it in a martial *hand!* be *curst* and brief; it is no matter how *witty*, so it be *eloquent* and full of *invention;* taunt him with the *license* of *ink;* if thou *thou'st* him some thrice, it shall not be amiss; and as many *lies* as will lie in thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big *enough* for the bed of Ware in England, set 'em down: go, about it. Let there be *gall enough* in thy *ink*, though thou *write* with a *goose-pen*, no matter."

"Twelfth Night" being an ideal of a fiction, we accept any improbability as a matter of course, because viewed through the aerial and magic medium of the fancy. Not but that the charac-

ters are based upon true and natural principles, but that the motives to action are often so slight, and so whimsical, and the display of moral causes so inadequate, that the imagination is called upon to supply the links of connection or bridge over the chasms that frequently yawn between cause and effect. There is in "Twelfth Night" nothing of the logic of passion, nothing of the gradual development of some predominant feeling throughout all its stages, which are found in those plays of Shakespeare in which he teaches some deep moral, or brings prominently forward some great truth. On the contrary, the portraits, which the poet, with his usual delight in contrast has fixed in this frame-work of fiction, are those of the most genuine and impulsive follies and foibles of man. It is this spontaneousness of emotion in all the characters, which gives propriety to the title "What you will," that is, act your pleasure, follow your fancy. And although the play is, as children say of *their* plays, all *make-believe* — and what else than to make believe is the end of reasoning, rhetoric, eloquence, poetry, as well as of the imitative arts? — yet in this case the representation is of that which is the most common in human life — the seductions of the sense and the imagination; and while we clearly perceive that the comedy as a whole is incredible and wears the air of romance, we are at the same time delighted with the essential truth of its imitation of nature.

The title "Twelfth Night" evidently has reference to the subject of the play, which is Man in his relations to Pleasure and Pastime. This title, though suggestive of license, involves morality. As the play gives us a phase of life in which excess seems to be the rule, and moderation the exception, Shakespeare, who is ever loyal to morality, notifies us by the title that it is merely a mirthful, comic entertainment, which looks at life as it is seen under its most genial aspect; an ideal picture, from which all view of serious affairs is excluded; a fit diversion for a season of revelry and misrule; a dramatic jest, designed only for amusement.

The organic idea will, of course, give form to the characters, incidents, metaphors, diction, and phraseology of the piece. This idea is but another name for the law which forms the moral basis of the play, and which is illustrated both in its observance and in its infraction, that is, by one or more characters that are the direct representatives of it, and by others that embody the different phases and degrees of error which arise from its violation. In "Twelfth Night," this fundamental law is that rule of reason which prescribes the standard of excellence, and declares that the highest beauty is virtue, or grace (which always implies the presence of temperance and decorum); that genius — comprising all natural gifts and propensities, but more particularly when applied to the mind, wit, imagination, and invention — must

be subordinated to the judgment, and that pleasure, whether of the sense or imagination, must be restrained from excess. The observance of this rule will be evinced in grace and elegance of mind and deportment, and in gentleness and generosity of sentiment; such a character is Viola. The grossest infractions of the rule, on the other hand will be personated by those whose low tastes, intemperate habits, exuberant humor, or rude jests, violate all decorum, — such as Sir Toby and his companions, — or by such as are the dupes of their imaginations, through inordinate vanity, as Malvolio; while characters more complex will be found in those who, like Orsino and Olivia, are marked by grace and gentility both inborn and acquired, but who, grounding their affections upon mere external beauty, are devoid of all restraint in the indulgence of their fancies and passions.

But before proceeding to an analysis of the characters in detail, it is, perhaps, advisable to take a glance at the vocabulary of the piece, in order that, in the quotations that will be made for purposes of illustration, we may at the same time perceive the inimitable skill with which the poet reflects his organic idea in his diction.

Of the notions involved in the organic idea, the prominent ones are reason, fitness, excellence, beauty, virtue, grace, pleasure, genius, restraint, excess; to these add fiction.

These words may be taken as radicals or generic terms, under which, respectively, may be

classified all words containing similar or analogous significations. And in many instances these classes may be enlarged by reference to the etymon of the radical term, for it will frequently be the case that a foreign etymon is used in various senses, translatable by words that seem to have no affinity nor analogy with the English derivative. For instance, if "appetite," or "good life," be placed under the head of "genius," it seems, at the first glance, an arbitrary classification; but when we go to the Latin *genius*, the primary and general signification of which is "the *spirit innate* in everything," which meaning, particularly applied, becomes, "A, with respect to the enjoyment of life, the *spirit of social enjoyment, fondness for good living, taste, appetite, inclination;* B, with respect to one's spiritual life, *wit, talent, genius*,"[1] we perceive that there is a latent analogy between the words, — sufficient, at least, to preserve the homogeneousness of the vocabulary into which they are introduced. The poet's object is to diversify his expressions while preserving unity of effect; and to this end he avails himself of all analogies, from whatever source they may be derived.

It is to be observed with regard to Shakespeare's diction in general, that whenever he introduces any class of words, he preserves the æsthetic balance — the light and shade of his work — by the use of their opposites or correlatives. But this must almost always be a necessity, by

[1] Andrews's *Lat. Lex.*

reason of the opposition involved in the idea of the play, that is, through the observance and through the infraction of the law constituting such idea.

Of *restraint*, the sense is obvious in such words and phrases as *retention*, *hold*, *hold in*, *reserve*, *confine*, *limit*, *inclose*, *compass*, *bind*, *bound* (*determine*, *end*), *tie*, *shut up*, *conclude*, *bar*, *obstruct*, *clog*, *close*, *close in*, *keep in*, *hide*, *conceal*.

To these may be added words significant of reticence, as *silence*, *dumbness*, *peace*, *secret*.

From *excess*, or *exceed*, we have a class of words allied by analogies, more or less direct, with its radical signification, which is *to go out*, whence *to go out or beyond* (sc.) a *bound or limit*, such as *transgress*, *extravagance*, *surfeit*, *overweening*, *over-far*, *exult*, *extort*, *draw out*, *extract*, *derive*, *except*. Also, *deliver*, *unfold*, *unclasp*, *open*, *display*, *discover*, which last are opposites of *hide*, *conceal*, classed under *restraint*. Also words expressive of *unrestraint*, as *abandon*, *divulge*, *publish*, *blab*, *babble*, *tell tales*, *cry out*, *clamorous*, *holla*, which last are opposites of words expressive of *reticence*.

With *reason* may be placed *judgment*, *discourse*, *ground* (*basis*, *base*), *prove*, *proof*, *probation*, *dispute*, *wrangle* (*fight*, *quarrel*, *brawl*), also *syllogism*, *conclusion*, *affirmative* (*negative*), *confirm*, *deny*. Also *wisdom*, opposed to which are *folly*, *fool*, *fooling*, *foolery* (*ass*). Also *madness*, *madman*, *mad*.

Under the head of *fitness*, will fall *fit*, *apt*, *suit*,

agree, convènt, adhere, cohere, jump, become (to go or enter in, to meet,)[1] *fadge, match, consonancy,* and their opposites.

With *pleasure* are allied, by analogous significations, *will, pastime, revel, entertainment, liking, sweet, dulcet, merry, skipping, jocund.* Opposed to *pleasure*, are *sorrow, sadness, grief, pang, pain, hurt, exasperate, suffering, melancholy, trouble, calamity.* Also *loathe, mourn, sicken.*

Of *grace*, the following definitions are given by Worcester: *favor, love, kindness, virtue, goodness, pardon (forgive)*, natural *excellence*, recommendation, *beauty, ornament, flower*, highest *perfection.* All these occur in the play.

Favor (the leading sense of grace) is also used for the countenance or personal appearance. With *favor* we may place *gift, give, bestow, bounty, honor, profit, advantage;* also *leave, allow, praise, commendation, approbation, approve*, with their correlatives or opposites, as *shame, blame, fault, refuse, denial.*

The Latin etymon of *grace, gratia*, gives a similar list with some additions, as *love, friendship, kindness, courtesy, service, thanks, gratitude, return, requital*, with which last may be taken *restore, answer, recompense, payment, satisfaction (enough).*

With *grace*, we may place also, *gratuity, gracious, accomplished (supplied, filled).*

With *beauty* are affined *fair, beauteous*, and all words expressive of that which beautifies, or of

[1] Vide Richardson's *Dict.* in v.

beautiful objects, as *roses*, *violets*, *flowers*, *colors*, *gems*, *radiant*, *shine*, *o'erflourish*, *prank*.

Opposed to *beauty*, and the terms standing under it, are *deformed*, *blemish*, *hideous*, *fearful*, *dark*.

Affined with excellence, are *noble*, *good*, *fine*, *high*, *notable*, (*notorious*), *estimable*. Also words implying excellence, as to *crown*; *validity*, *worth*, *strength*, *pitch*, (*i. e.* highest rise).

Opposites of these, are *bad*, *evil*, *ill*, *abatement*, *low*.

Generally opposed to *grace*, and the words classed with it, are *contempt*, *cruelty*, *scorn*, *spite*, *abuse*, *wrong*, *offense*, *malignancy*, *malice*, *revenge*.

Genius is thus defined by Richardson: "The *nature*, the natural powers and faculties of a man, the powers and faculties with which he is *born*.

The natural bent, or disposition, or inclination of the mind, and peculiarly the power or faculty which *bears* or *produces*.[1]

Under this head may be classed all words signifying natural gifts or faculties of a man, whether of the mind, as *talent*, *wit*, *fancy*, *imagination*, *capacity*; or of the body, as parts of the body (of which more hereafter), or constitutional qualities, as *valor*, *cowardice*. Also the senses and their functions.

From the Latin etymon, *genius*, we have *good life*, *taste* (*relish*, *savor*, *gust*), *appetite* (*hunger*, *eating*, *drinking*), *desire*.

Also *soul*, *spirit*, whether good or evil, whence

[1] Vide Richardson's *Dict.* in v.

fiend, *devil*, *satan*, etc. The inimitable scene in which Sir Toby and Fabian *make believe* that they think Malvolio mad and possessed of a devil, is a humorous development of the organic idea, — the predominance of the genius over the reason.

With *genius*, also may be placed *nature*, *birth*, *breeding*, *bear*, *born*, *youth*, *young*, *old*.

Conjugates of *genius*, are *generous*, *gentle* (*courteous*, *kind*, *civil*, also included under *grace*); whence *gentleman*, *gentlewoman*, and titles of gentility, *knight*, *lord*, *lady*, *madonna*, etc., with which may be placed as opposites *rude*, *ruffian*, *uncivil*, *fell*, *cruel*, *sinister*.

Fiction is defined as a portraiture or image (sc.) of a likeness or resemblance.[1]

With *fiction* place *feign*, *lie*, *counterfeit*, *mock*, *imitate*, *resemble*, *dissemble*, *semblative;* also *image*, *copy*, *dream*, *shape*, *form*, *fashion*, *frame*, *example*, *instance*.

A fiction is a work of imagination; therefore we may place under this head, somewhat arbitrarily, perhaps, yet the analogy is sufficiently obvious, all words referring to *letters* and the arts, as *metaphor*, *hyperbolical*, *poetical*, *eloquent*, *numbers*, *verse*, *prose*, *picture*, *music*, *scholar*, *pen*, *write*, and others.

The object of fiction is to create *belief*, as that of *rhetoric* is to *persuade*. Therefore, words may be placed here like *belief*, *faith*, *truth*, *troth*, *sooth*, *opinion*, *persuade*, *assure*, which might have been classed under reason.

[1] Vide Richardson's *Dict.* in v.

The above analysis is by no means exhaustive; the lists might be easily extended, but they will perhaps suffice to show the method by which all the diversified phraseology of the play is woven into one homogeneous texture.

No analysis will be attempted here of the characters as *dramatic creations*. They will be treated of wholly as *types of classes*, not as *individuals*. The object is only to designate those moral and philosophical principles which form the first sketch and outline of the character, before it was invested with life and individuality by the creative imagination of the poet. The analysis is pushed no further than may be necessary to demonstrate the relation of the character to the fundamental idea.

Orsino, the Duke — a man of poetical mind and elegant tastes, who is enraptured with music and with flowers — affects all the pangs and woes of love; but his love is devoid of passion; it is but the indulgence of his imagination, a fondness for brooding on the images of his fancy. Neither Olivia's virtue, nor her sweetness of temper, nor the graces of her mind, attract him; it is her person alone, —

> "that miracle and *queen* of *gems*
> That *nature pranks* her in," —

which, catching his eye, awakens his fancy, and works upon him like a species of sorcery.

> "O, when mine *eyes* did see Olivia first,
> Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence:
> That instant was I turn'd into a hart,

And my *desires*, like *fell and cruel* hounds,
E'er since pursue me."

His theories accord with his practice. He holds that love is dependent upon the sense, and that it cannot survive the loss of beauty in its object. His warning to the page is: —

"Then let thy *love* be *younger* than thyself,
Or thy *affection* cannot *hold the bent;*
For women are as *roses*, whose *fair flower*
Being once *display'd*, doth fall that very hour."

And Olivia's love for the page, too, he attributes — and justly — to the effect that Cesario's beauty has upon her sense, as in his threat: —

"But this, your minion, whom I know you *love*,
And whom, by Heaven, I swear, I tender *dearly*,
Him will I tear out of that *cruel eye*,
Where he sits *crowned* in his master's *spite*."

When assured that Olivia's love is beyond his reach, he finds no difficulty in dropping a sentiment that is fed only by his imagination, and bestowing his preference upon Viola, whose devotion touches his heart, and who thenceforward becomes "Orsino's mistress and his *fancy's queen*."

Orsino's poetical mind invests his fantastic raptures with a beauty which shields them from ridicule, while the sound sense and good taste which are conspicuous in his reflections, relieve the effeminacy of his conduct. In the first lines he speaks, both sides of his character — his sensuous nature and his cultivated mind — are put before

us; and, at the same time, the key-note of the play is struck in the mention made of the pleasures of the sense, the tendency to excess, and the capriciousness of fancy: —

> "If *music* be the *food* of *love*, *play* on;
> *Give* me *excess* of it, that, *surfeiting*,
> The *appetite* may *sicken* and so die:
> That *strain* again; it had a dying fall:
> O, it came o'er my *ear* like the *sweet sound*
> That *breathes* upon a bank of *violets*,
> Stealing and *giving odor*. *Enough!* no more:
> 'Tis not so *sweet* now as it was before."

Then follows the comment: —

> "O *spirit of love!* how quick and fresh art thou,
> That, notwithstanding thy *capacity*
> Receiveth as the sea, naught *enters* there,
> Of what *validity* and *pitch* soe'er,
> But falls into *abatement* and *low price*
> Even in a minute! So full of *shapes* is *fancy*,
> That it alone is *high fantastical*."

Olivia, the gracious and accomplished Countess, who

> "sways her house, commands her followers,
> Takes and *gives* back affairs and their dispatch
> With such a *smooth*, *discreet*, *and stable bearing*,"

falls, nevertheless, under the fascination of beauty, and against it she can make no resistance. She feels

> "A *youth's perfections*
> With an *invisible* and subtle stealth
> *To creep in at her eyes*."

It acts like a charm upon her; she herself calls it "an enchantment": —

"She does she knows not what; and fears to find
Her eye too great a *flatterer for her mind.*"

We first hear of Olivia as yielding to excessive sorrow for the death of her brother; excluding all messengers from her house, and determined to live a veiled cloistress for "seven years heat," but smitten with the beauty of the false Cesario, she instantly forgets her brother and her grief, and becomes wholly occupied with her passion for the seeming page, and with devices to win him to her love. So unrestrained are her feelings that she woos the disguised Viola even in the moment when disdain is most vividly depicted on her countenance:—

"O, what a deal of *scorn* looks *beautiful*
In the *contempt* and anger of his *lip!*
Cesario, by the *roses* of the spring,
By *maidhood*, honor, *truth*, and everything,
I *love* thee so, that, maugre all thy pride,
Nor *wit*, nor *reason*, can my passion *hide.*
Do not *extort* thy *reasons* from this clause,
For, that I woo, thou therefore hast no *cause;*
But, rather, *reason* thus with *reason* fetter;
Love sought is *good*, but *given* unsought is *better.*"

And we readily forgive this sacrifice of maiden pride, for the reason that we know that she is under an influence she cannot resist. Nay, more, she looks upon her own condition as a species of madness; speaks of her "most *extracting frenzy;*" and conscious that both mind and soul are enthralled by the beauty that so charms her sense, she exclaims to Cesario:—

"A *fiend* like thee might bear my *soul* to hell."

Another instance of the power of beauty, through the eye, to enchain the mind and captivate the heart, is found in Antonio's love for Sebastian. This is a picture of affectionate friendship frequently observed in real life, where a man of middle age, valiant and generous, and of adventurous habits of life, takes a sudden fancy for some handsome and ingenuous youth, for whom his purse and his sword are ever ready. Antonio almost worships Sebastian. He gives him "*his love, without retention or restraint.*" They part upon the sea-shore, Sebastian setting out for Orsino's court, whither Antonio is at first deterred from going, Orsino being his enemy; but

"his *desire*, more sharp than filed steel,
Doth spur him on,"

and he resolves to follow.

"But come what may, I do *adore* thee so
That danger shall seem *sport*, and I will go."

At the risk of his life, he rejoins Sebastian, lends him his purse — for

"Haply, his *eye* shall light upon some toy
He has *desire* to purchase,"

and in every way proves himself a most noble and true-hearted friend. And all this feeling is awakened by Sebastian's prepossessing appearance, as we learn from Antonio's reproaches, when he thinks Sebastian ungrateful to him: —

"*To his image*, which, methought, did promise
Most venerable worth, I did *devotion*.

> But, O how vile an *idol proves* this god!
> Thou hast, Sebastian, done *good feature shame;*"

and in the lines that follow, Antonio is made the mouth-piece of the moral of the play:—

> "In *nature* there's no *blemish but the mind;*
> None can be call'd *deform'd* but *the unkind.*
> VIRTUE IS BEAUTY; but the *beauteous evil*
> Are empty trunks, *o'erflourish'd* by the *devil.*"

Antonio afterwards calls his affection for Sebastian "a witchcraft."

The influence of the eye over the imagination is again humorously alluded to by Sir Toby in his description of the mutual fear Cesario and Sir Andrew entertain of each other's skill and fierceness. "They will kill one another *by the look, like cockatrices.*"

Viola is an embodiment of the organic idea. In her, both wit and fancy are regulated by a perfect taste; and to this refinement of mind, she adds gentleness, truth, and generosity. She is an impersonation of grace and gentility; and her character alone would suffice to give elegance to the whole play.

Viola cherishes a secret love. Unlike the flaunting "fancy" of the Duke, or the irrepressible passion of Olivia, her love buries itself in her bosom, and finds no utterance nor manifestation, save in such covert allusions as her wit or fancy sometimes lead her to indulge in. It is painted as an inward passion, a "concealment," even as her character and sex are concealed. Though a

sudden liking, it goes to the very depths of her woman's soul. It is that intense and unchangeable feeling which stakes the whole happiness of life on one cast, and, when unrequited, breaks the heart. We cannot imagine either the Duke or Olivia willing to die for the object of their passions; their love is, after all, but self-love, a desire of possession, and is far from reaching that height of devotion that willingly sacrifices life and all for the gratification of the beloved object. Not so with Viola. When threatened by the Duke with death, because standing between him and Olivia's love, she exclaims: —

> "I, most *jocund*, *apt* and *willingly*
> To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die."
>
> [*Following.*

Viola is a type of self-restraint, where all else is self-abandonment; of concealment, where all else is open avowal. She woos Olivia for Orsino, when she herself "pines in thought" for him; and this she does, taught by her own deep passion, with an earnestness, a vehemency, an engaging eloquence, that Orsino himself might vainly seek to display. Her fancy is filled with images of rare and exquisite beauty, and she is, withal, an accomplished rhetorician. "Thou dost speak masterly," is the exclamation called from the Duke by one of her eloquent utterances. And as this gift, or acquirement, or, rather, this exercise of imagination, guided by taste, appears to so much advantage in her first interview with Olivia, the scene will be quoted.

The whole dialogue is in a highly figurative strain, and exhibits an intimate blending of wit and fancy; while a peculiar sprightliness is given to it by the rhetorical figures being taken, in good measure, from the subject of rhetoric itself. Throughout the scene, there breathes the spirit of romantic literature, delightfully in keeping with the whole idea of the play.

"*Olivia.* *Give* me my *veil;* come, throw it o'er my *face,*
We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.

Enter VIOLA.

Viola. The *honorable lady* of the house, which is she?

Oli. Speak to me, I shall *answer* for her. Your *will?*

Vio. Most *radiant, exquisite,* and *unmatchable beauty!* I pray you tell me if this be the *lady* of the house; for I never saw her: I would be *loath* to cast away my *speech;* for, besides that it is *excellently well penn'd,* I have taken great *pains* to *con it. Good beauties,* let me sustain no *scorn;* I am very comptible, even to the least *sinister* usage.

Oli. Whence came you, sir?

Vio. I can *say little more than I have studied,* and that question's *out of my part. Good, gentle* one, *give* me *modest assurance* if you be the lady of the house, that I may *proceed in my speech.*

Oli. Are you a comedian?

Vio. No, my profound *heart;* and yet, by the very fangs of *malice,* I swear I am not that I *play.* Are you the *lady* of the house?

Oli. If I do not usurp myself, I am.

Vio. Most certain, if you are she, you do usurp yourself; for what is yours to *bestow* is not yours to *reserve.* But this is from my commission. I will on with my *speech in your praise,* and then show you the *heart* of my message.

Oli. Come to what is important in it; I *forgive* you the *praise.*

Vio. Alas! I *took great pains to study it*, and 'tis *poetical.*

Oli. It is the more like to be *feigned;* I pray you *keep it in.* I heard you were *saucy* at my gates; and *allow'd* your approach rather to wonder at you than to hear you. If you be not *mad*, begone; if you have *reason*, be brief; 'tis not that time of moon with me to make one in so *skipping a dialogue.*

Maria. Will you hoist sail, sir? here lies your way.

Vio. No, good swabber; I am to hull here a little longer. Some *mollification for your giant*, *sweet* lady.

Oli. Tell me your mind.

Vio. I am a messenger.

Oli. Sure, you have some *hideous* matter to *deliver*, when the *courtesy* of it is so fearful. Speak your office.

Vio. It alone concerns your *ear.* I bring no overture of war, no taxation of homage; I hold the *olive in my hand;* my words are as full of peace as matter.

Oli. Yet you began *rudely.* What are you? What *would* you?

Vio. The *rudeness* that hath appear'd in me have I learn'd from my *entertainment.* What I am, and what I would, are as *secret* as maidenhead; to your *ears*, divinity; to any other's, profanation.

Oli. Give us the place alone: we will hear this *divinity!* [*Exit* MARIA]. Now, sir, *what is your text?*

Vio. *Most sweet lady,* —

Oli. A *comfortable doctrine*, and much may be said of it. Where *lies your text?*

Vio. In Orsino's *bosom.*

Oli. In his *bosom?* In what *chapter of his bosom?*

Vio. To *answer* by *the method* in the *first of his heart.*

Oli. O, I have read it; it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

Vio. Good madam, let me *see your face.*

Oli. Have you any commission from your *lord* to negotiate with my *face?* You are *now out of your text;* but we will draw the curtain, and show you the *picture.* [*Unveiling.*] Look you, sir, such a one I was this present. Is't not well done?

Vio. *Excellently* done, if God did all.

Oli. 'Tis in-*grain*, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.

Vio. 'Tis *beauty* truly blent, whose *red and white*
Nature's own *sweet* and *cunning hand* laid on;
Lady, you are the *cruel'st* she alive,
If you will lead these *graces* to the grave,
And leave the world no *copy*.

Oli. O, sir, I will not be so *hard-hearted;* I will give out divers schedules of my *beauty*. It shall be inventoried, and every particle and utensil label'd to my *will;* as item, two *lips*, indifferent *red;* item, two *gray eyes*, with lids to them; item, one *neck*, one *chin*, and so forth. Were you sent hither to *praise* me?

Vio. I see you what you are: you're too proud;
But if you were the *devil*, you are *fair*.
My *lord and master loves* you: O, such *love*
Could be but *recompens'd*, though you were *crown'd*
The *nonpareil of beauty!*

Oli. How does he *love* me?

Vio. With *adorations*, *fertile tears*,
With *groans that thunder love*, *with sighs of fire*.

Oli. Your lord does know my mind. I cannot *love* him.
Yet I suppose him *virtuous*, know him *noble*,
Of great estate, of fresh and *stainless youth*,
In *voices* well *divulg'd; free*, *learn'd*, and *valiant*,
And in dimension and the *shape of nature*,
A *gracious person;* but yet I cannot *love* him;
He might have took his *answers* long ago.

Vio. If I did *love* you in my master's flame,
With such a *suffering*, such a deadly life,
In your *denial*, I would find no *sense;*
I would not understand it.

Oli. Why, what would you?

Vio. Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my *soul* within the house;
Write loyal cantons of *contemned love*,
And *sing them loud*, even in the dead of night;

Holla your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the *babbling gossip* of the air
Cry out, Olivia! O, you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth,
But you should pity me.

Oli. You might do much. What is your *parentage?*

Vio. Above my fortunes; yet my state is well;
I am a *gentleman.*

Oli. Get you to your lord;
I cannot *love* him; let him send no more;
Unless, perchance, you come to me again
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well;
I *thank* you for your *pains:* spend this for me.

Viola. I am no fee'd post, lady; keep your purse;
My master, not myself, lacks *recompense.*
Love make his *heart* of flint, that you shall *love;*
And let your *fervor*, like my master's, be
Plac'd in *contempt!* Farewell, *fair cruelty.*"

Viola's refinement, her spirit of self-sacrifice, and her fervent and hidden love, are in direct contrast with the lawless merriment of Sir Toby, the egotistical passion of the Duke, the unrestrained fondness of Olivia, and the sensual character of all.

It needs no analysis to show how Sir Toby, with his spontaneous humor and love of humor, his genuine spirit of fun, and his deep and untimely potations, stands in relation to the fundamental idea. The same may be said of Sir Andrew, the born fool. In them both the supremacy of appetite, and the consequent abasement of the mind, are obvious. Sir Andrew, — "the manikin," as Fabian calls him, — so feeble

in mind and body, so feeble even in his vices, but who boasts of having "the back-trick simply as strong as any man in Illyria," himself gives it utterance. "I am a *great eater of beef*," says he, "and *I fear that does harm to my wit*."

In like manner, Fabian, with his intense relish for sport, and Maria, the genius of mischief, whose humor is as ready and expressed in hyperboles as bold as those of Sir Toby himself, are evidently characters which represent different phases of the violation of the law of decorum.

The ridicule of the play is concentred on the steward Malvolio, for the good reason that, in addition to the vices of his character, he is hollow and hypocritical. He has none of that good-will or kindliness of nature, as his name suggests, which can pardon the foibles of others, or cause his own to be overlooked. "Sick of *self-love*," and "*tasting* with a *distempered appetite*," he can neither relish the witticisms of the jester, nor take part in any mirth or pastime. Beneath his gravity and affected decorum, there lurk insufferable conceit and pretension. Formal and censorious, he looks with a puritanical frown upon the pleasures and follies of others, yet imagines that his personal attractions have caught the eye of the Countess, and straightway practices deportment as "*Count* Malvolio," and indulges in dreams of his "day-bed," his "state," and his "branched velvet gown." "*Imagination blows him*." The quick-

witted Maria thus throws off a sketch of his character: —

"The devil a puritan that he is, or anything *constantly*, but a *time-pleaser;* an *affection'd ass*, that cons state *without book*, and utters it by great swaths: the best *persuaded* of himself, so cramm'd, as he thinks, with *excellences*, that it is his *ground* of *faith* that all that look on him *love* him; and on that vice in him will my *revenge* find *notable cause* to work."

Duped by vanity and imagination, he falls an easy prey to the snare that is spread for him, and is covered with immeasurable ridicule.

The whole plot against Malvolio may be regarded as *une petite comédie*, in which he is made to assume a costume and act a part for the amusement of the other characters. It is almost a play within a play, and illustrates the power of fiction over the imagination.

Among the other characters, all of whom are absorbed in the pursuit of their own ends, stands idly the wise, cool-headed jester, Feste. He reads the minds of all, penetrates their designs, and sees clearly in what "admirable fooling" they all are. A respecter of times and persons, he adapts himself to all in turn. The incoherent jargon with which he tickles the ears of the silly Sir Andrew, who thinks it "the best fooling when all is done," becomes keen and logical satire in his colloquies with the cultivated Duke. He is aware "that foolery does walk about the orb, like the sun; it shines everywhere," and this truth gives him high regard for his own profession. Fool as he is, he

" wears no motley in his brain," but is a serious, thoughtful man. His " practice is as full of labor as a wise man's art." He puts forth all his professional ability to roast Malvolio, not only because between them there is the natural aversion which must exist between the intolerant and the all-tolerant, but more particularly because Malvolio sought to discredit him and his vocation with his mistress. His concluding remark, as he exults over the mortified steward, " thus doth the whirligig of time bring in his revenges," is more philosophic than would befit the mouth of any other personage in the play.

In fact, the Clown, like most of Shakespeare's clowns, is an embodiment of the fundamental idea in its most abstract form. In Viola, the *observance* of the rule is manifested in its results, — in the modesty and decorum of her deportment, and in the taste with which she clothes her fancies in rhetorical forms; but in the Clown, the sources of the rule — that is, the judgment and reasoning faculty — receive a fantastic embodiment, and his whimsical wit invests itself in the forms of logic. He is the logician of the play, — " a corrupter of words." His more elaborate witticisms are arguments that lack but little of regular syllogistic form. Take, for instance, the passage in which he excuses himself to the Lady Olivia for his absence by an argument, somewhat cloudy, it is true, that virtue and sin are alike folly, and concludes by proving her a fool.

"*Clown.* Good madonna, *give* me *leave* to *prove* you a *fool.*

Olivia. Can you do it?

Clo. Dexteriously, good madonna.

Oli. Make your proof.

Clo. I must catechise you for it, madonna. *Good* my mouse of *virtue, answer* me.

Oli. Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll bide your *proof.*

Clo. Good madonna, why *mourn'st* thou?

Oli. Good fool, for my brother's death.

Clo. I think his *soul* is in hell, madonna.

Oli. I know his *soul* is in heaven, *fool.*

Clo. The more *fool,* madonna, to *mourn* for your brother's *soul* being in heaven. Take away the *fool, gentlemen.*"

Equally cogent, though more whimsically expressed, is his argument with the Duke that a man is worse for his friends, and the better for his enemies.

"*Duke.* How dost thou, my *good* fellow?

Clown. Truly, sir, the *better* for my *foes,* and the *worse* for my *friends.*

Duke. Just the contrary; the *better* for thy *friends.*

Clo. No, sir, the *worse.*

Duke. How can that be?

Clo. Marry, sir, they *praise* me, and make an *ass* of me; now my *foes* tell me plainly I am an *ass;* so that, by my *foes,* sir, I profit in the knowledge of myself; and by my *friends* I am *abused;* so that, *conclusions* to be as kisses, if your four *negatives* make your two *affirmatives,* why, then the *worse* for my *friends,* and the *better* for my *foes.*

Duke. Why, this is *excellent.*"

The poet has seen fit, moreover, to put into the mouth of this ratiocinative Fool the two fundamental principles of all logic, — the law of iden-

tity and the law of contradiction. The latter of these is thus given: —

"*Clown.* Will you *make me believe* that I am not sent for you?

Sebastian. Go to, go to, thou 'art a *foolish* fellow; let me be clear of thee.

Clo. Well held out, i' *faith!* No, I do not know you; nor I am not sent to you by my *lady*, to bid you come speak with her; nor your name is not Master Cesario; nor this is not my *nose* neither. *Nothing that is so, is so.*"

The law of identity is still more pointedly put: —

"*Clown.* *Bonos dies*, Sir Toby; for as the old hermit of Prague, that never saw *pen and ink*, very *wittily* said to a niece of King Gorboduc, '*That, that is, is,*' so I, being Master Parson, am Master Parson. For what is that, but that? and is, but is?"

And here it may be observed in passing, that the mention of King Gorboduc is not without significance. In rendering his comedy an ideal of a fiction, or, more particularly, of a play, Shakespeare kept before his mind the dramatic art and usages of his own country; and in "Twelfth Night," there are found, among other references to stage-plays, several allusions to the older English drama. The stave, which the Clown sings at the end of Sc. 2, Act. IV., contains a direct allusion to the Vice and Devil of the old Moralities, and "Gorboduc" mentioned in the passage last quoted, is the title of the oldest tragedy extant in the English tongue. The song, too, which the Clown sings at the end of the play, which some

commentators have pronounced a piece of nonsense, foisted in by the actor who took the Clown's part, and which others, again, have regarded as an epitome of all the philosophy of life, may be considered, in this ideal of a play, as a representative of that song or jig, sung by the Clown, with an accompaniment of the tabor, with which theatrical entertainments invariably terminated in that period of the drama just anterior to Shakespeare's career.

It is noteworthy, also, that the Fool excels in mimicry, and is the only clown in Shakespeare's plays who is introduced with a tabor." Act III., Sc. 1.

But, although in keeping with the artistic design of the piece, the Fool is an exemplar of the clowns, — the Tarletons and Kempes of Shakespeare's stage, — he nevertheless represents, in the thoughtfulness of his character, and the foil which his satiric wit lends to the follies of others, that deep seriousness which forms, of necessity, the background of the comic. The ridicule of comedy would have no meaning, but for the comparison that is silently carried on between the follies portrayed and the standard of propriety in our own minds; for all comic representations of life present only the relations of man's folly and caprice to the governing reason, and depend for their effect upon the constant recognition of the dignity of man's being and destiny. If life were actually the farce, and man the frivolous creature

comedy depicts, it would hardly move our mirth. The laugh comes from the gravest side of our nature. Hence, in all the characters of "Twelfth Night," notwithstanding their immoderate indulgence of fancies, whims, and appetites, we see a substratum of shrewdness and good sense. Even Sir Andrew has moments of sober reflection, and, though he has no "exquisite reason" for his opinions, he has "reason good enough." Hence, too, the paradoxes of Sir Toby and the syllogisms of the Clown, which are not merely casual strokes of humor that occurred to the poet in the heat of composition, but are organic outgrowths of his radical idea. This background of rationality, to which, as a standard, speech and conduct are referred, heightens the force of the ridiculous, and is of the very essence of the comic.

This comedy is pervaded with the spirit of literature and gentility. It is lifted above this working-day world into a sphere of ease, culture, and good-breeding. Its characters are votaries of pleasure in different degrees, from the lowest gratifications of the sense up to the more refined pleasures derived from the exercise of the imagination, which, after all, are but the pleasures of the sense at second-hand. Beside the air of elegance it possesses, it is filled to the brim and overflowing with the spirit that seeks to enjoy this world without one thought or aspiration beyond. It jumps the hereafter entirely. Every scene of it glows with the warmth and sunshine of physical

enjoyment. It places before us the sensual man, with his fondness for cheer, his cakes and ale, his delights of the eye and ear, his pleasure in pastime and sport, his high estimation of a good leg and a good voice, in short, of all that can gratify the sense, win favor, or conduce to worldly advantage. *Carpe diem*, sings the Epicurean, and in the same strain sings the Clown : —

> " What is love ? 'tis not hereafter,
> Present mirth hath present laughter ;
> What's to come is still unsure :
> In delay there lies no plenty ;
> Then come kiss me, sweet-and-twenty,
> Youth's a stuff will not endure."

Every reader feels the genial spirit of this play ; at least, if there be any who does not feel it, let him be pitied, if not distrusted. In his self-complacency, he should reflect upon the fate of " the fox " Malvolio, to whom he must, perforce, bear a moral likeness. There is a tone of good nature, a kindliness, a mutual praise and flattery prevailing among the characters, which produce a most agreeable effect. But it is not in this alone ; nor is it in the moral cast of the characters, mirth-lovers or pleasure-seekers as they are ; nor is it in the incidents, though every leading scene is either one of revelry, or of love-making, or of sportive mischief — that the secret lies of the glowing and genial tone of " Twelfth Night," and of the pleasant impression it makes upon us ; but this impression is greatly deepened, and a flesh-and-blood warmth

is given to the whole aspect of life here presented, by the method which governs the rhetoric and harmonizes it with the fundamental idea of the piece. Shakespeare always fills his play with allusions to those senses, organs, or faculties, the objects or influence of which tempt man into a violation of that rule of life involved in the moral basis of the piece. In "Twelfth Night," this rule is temperance in the indulgence of pleasure, and a love of moral rather than of physical beauty. All the senses and bodily organs, therefore, as administering to sensual gratification, are brought forward; and though the eye, as chiefly influential in exciting the imagination, is more frequently alluded to than any other sense, yet there is hardly a member or organ of the human frame — in its more general subdivisions, at least — that is not spoken of in this play. Thus we have *skull*, *brain*, *pia-mater*, *hair*, *head of hair*, *brow*, *face*, *ears*, *eyes*, *nose*, *lips*, *chin*, *beard*, *cheek*, *mouth*, *tongue*, *throat*, *palate*, *hand*, *fingers*, *sides*, *leg*, *back*, *thigh*, *foot*, *feet*, *toe*, *limbs*, *breast*, *breath*, *voice*, *sinews*, *nails*, *bosom*, *heart*, *liver*, *neck*, *blood*, *features*, *jaws*, and several others. Many of these parts of the body are mentioned many times. These reiterated allusions force us to associate our thoughts of life with our bodily existence, and prevent our views from stretching beyond our animal or sensual nature.

Besides this constant mention made of the parts of the body, thought and passion are treated as

analogous to the senses, and, when spoken of, are invariably referred to the bodily organs, of which they are the supposed functions. A few instances will suffice to show this : —

" How will she *love* when the rich golden shaft
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
That live in her ! when *liver, brain* and *heart,*
Those sovereign thrones, are all *suppli'd and fill'd,* —
Her *sweet perfections* — with one self *king.*"

" There is no woman's *sides*
Can bide the beating of so strong a *passion*
As *love* doth *give my heart ;* no woman's *heart*
So big, to hold so much ; they lack *retention.*
Alas ! their *love* may be call'd *appetite,*—
No motion of the *liver*, but the *palate,* —
That *suffer surfeit, clogment*, and revolt ;
But mine is all as *hungry* as the sea,
And can *digest* as much."

So, too, vice is referred to constitutional influences : —

" I hate *ingratitude* more in a man
Than *lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness,*
Or any *taint of vice,* whose strong corruption
Inhabits our frail blood."

Sir Toby, commenting on the cowardice of Sir Andrew, attributes courage to the action of the liver : —

" For Andrew, if he were *opened*, and you find so much *blood* in his *liver* as will *clog* the *foot* of a flea, I'll *eat* the rest of the *anatomy.*"

In the following, good sense is referred to the strength of the brain : —

"Thou hast spoke for us, madonna, as if thy *eldest son* should be a *fool*, whose *skull* Jove cram with *brains*, for here he comes; one of thy *kin* has a most weak *pia-mater*."

There are, moreover, scattered throughout, frequent allusions to the attire of the person, as if the garments in some degree indicated the disposition of the wearer; for instance, the Clown says to the Duke, "Now the tailor make thy *doublet of changeable taffeta*, for thy *mind is a very opal*."

The influence of dress, too, upon personal appearance is noted: —

"I know your *favor* well,
Though now *you have no sea-cap on your head*."

The yellow stockings and cross-garters of Malvolio form a point in the plot.

The following passages will suffice to illustrate Shakespeare's methodical use of language and metaphor in this play. It will be observed that the diction is *chiefly* drawn from notions involved in *restraint* or *retention*, *excess* and *grace* in the sense of *thanks* or *requital*.

"So *please* my lord, I *might not be admitted*;
But from her handmaid do *return this answer*:
The element itself, till seven years' heat,
Shall not behold her *face* at *ample view*;
But like a *cloistress*, she will *veiled walk*
And water once a day her chamber round
With *eye-offending* brine: all this, to season
A brother's dead *love*, which she would *keep fresh*
And *lasting* in her *sad* remembrance.

Duke. O, she that hath a *heart* of that *fine frame*
To *pay this debt* of *love* but to a brother,
How will she *love*," etc.

"*Viola.* O, that I serv'd that *lady*,
And *might not be delivered* to the world
Till I had made my own occasion mellow
What my estate is!
Captain. That were hard to *compass*,
Because she will *admit no kind of suit;*
No, not the Duke's.
Vio. There is a *fair behavior* in thee, Captain;
And though that *nature* with a *beauteous* wall
Doth oft *close in* pollution, yet of thee
I will *believe* thou hast a mind that *suits*
With this thy *fair* and outward *character.*
I pr'ythee, — and I'll *pay* thee *bounteously*,
Conceal me what I am; and be my aid
For such *disguise*, as, haply, shall *become*
The *form* of my intent," etc.

"*Maria.* By my *troth*, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o' nights; your cousin, *my lady*, takes great *exceptions* to your *ill* hours.
Sir Toby. Why, let her *except before excepted.*
Mar. Ay, but you must *confine* yourself *within the modest limits* of *order.*
Sir To. Confine! I'll *confine* myself no *finer* than I am. These clothes are *good enough* to *drink* in, and so be these boots, too; an they be not, let them hang themselves in their own straps."

"*Duke.* Cesario,
Thou know'st no less but all; I have *unclasp'd*
To thee the *book* even of my *secret soul;*
Therefore, *good youth*, address thy *gait* unto her;
Be not *deni'd access;* stand at her doors,
And tell them, there thy fixed *foot* shall grow
Till thou have audience.
Viola. Sure, my *noble* lord,
If she be so *abandon'd* to her *sorrow*
As it is spoke, she *never will admit* me.

Duke. Be *clamorous*, and *leap all civil bounds*,
Rather than make *unprofited return*.
Vio. Say I do speak with her, my lord; what then?
Duke. O, then *unfold* the *passion* of my *love*,
Surprise her with *discourse* of my *dear faith*," etc.

"*Olivia.* Father, I charge thee, by thy reverence,
Here to *unfold* (though lately we intended
To *keep in darkness* what occasion now
Reveals before 'tis ripe) what thou dost know
Hath newly pass'd between this *youth* and me.
Priest. A *contract* of eternal *bond* of *love*,
Confirm'd by *mutual joinder* of your *hands*,
Attested by the holy *close of lips*,
Strengthened by *interchangement* of your rings,
And all the ceremony of this *compact*
Seal'd in my function," etc.

The short scene between Antonio and Sebastian, which, though but an articulation of the plot, is written in most elegant prose, is quoted for the purpose of showing the fidelity with which the dramatist adheres to his method, even in the most unimportant passages: —

"*Antonio.* Will you stay no longer? nor *will* you not that I go with you?

Sebastian. By your patience, no; my stars *shine darkly* over me; the *malignancy* of my fate might, perhaps, *distemper* yours; therefore, I shall crave of you your *leave* that I may bear my *evils* alone; it were a *bad recompense* for your *love*, to lay any of them on you.

Ant. Let me yet know of you whither you are *bound*.

Seb. No, *sooth*, sir; my *determinate* voyage is mere *extravagancy*. But I perceive in you so *excellent* a *touch* of *modesty*, that you will not *extort* from me what I am *willing* to *keep in*; therefore it charges me in manners the rather to *ex-*

press myself. You must know of me then, Antonio, my name is Sebastian, which I call'd Roderigo ; my father was that Sebastian of Messaline,[1] whom I know you have heard of; he *left* behind him myself and a sister, both *born* in an hour. If the heavens had been *pleas'd*, would we had so *ended!* but you, sir, alter'd that ; for, some hour before you took me from the breach of the sea, was my sister drown'd.

Ant. Alas, the day!

Seb. A *lady*, sir, though it was said she much *resembled* me, was yet of many *accounted beautiful ;* but, though I could not, with such *estimable* wonder, *overfar believe* that, yet thus far I will boldly *publish* her ; she bore a mind that envy could not but call *fair.* She is drown'd already with salt water, though I seem to drown her remembrance with more.

Ant. Pardon me, sir, your *bad entertainment.*

Seb. O *good* Antonio, forgive me your *trouble.*

Ant. If you will not murther me for my *love*, let me be your servant.

Seb. If you will not undo what you have done, that is, kill him whom you have recover'd, *desire* it not. Fare ye well at once ; my *bosom* is full of *kindness ;* and I am yet so near the manners of my mother, that upon the least occasion more, *mine eyes* will *tell tales* of me. I am *bound* to the *Count* Orsino's court. [*Exit.*

Ant. The *gentleness* of all the gods go with thee."

One of the charms in the style of "Twelfth Night" is the subtile intermingling of the poetical with the comic. Strains of exquisite fancy, breathing the very romance of love, alternate with dialogue filled with phrases and expressions most familiar in common speech and of universal use, because drawn from those states and conditions of the body and bodily life which are constantly

[1] This place exists only in the realm of fiction.

obtruding themselves upon notice. Such are "tired out of breath," "fool him black and blue," "laugh yourself into stitches," "strip stark naked," "his mother's milk is not out of him," and scores of others. These harmonize perfectly with the poetry of the play, inasmuch as the latter is purely fanciful and objective, and, as such, allied with the sensual side of man's nature. In fact, both the poetical and the comic of this play are but different branches of the fundamental idea.

Even the self-sacrificing love of Viola, so exquisitely alluded to by herself as a "pining in thought," is depicted by a metaphor drawn from appetite and by a description of her personal appearance, the beauty of which is wonderfully heightened by a simile taken from the fine arts, and having the effect both of painting and sculpture.

> "She never told her *love*,
> But let *concealment*, like a worm i' the bud,
> *Feed* on her *damask cheek;* she pin'd in thought,
> And, with a *green and yellow melancholy*,
> She sat, like *Patience on a monument*,
> *Smiling at grief.*"

There is another peculiarity in the style of this play which, it may be conjectured, proceeds from Shakespeare's perfection of finish as well as his deep sense of organic unity. He wrote his plays for popular representation, and therefore filled them with the most powerful dramatic effects. At the same time he satisfied his own mind by pouring into them the profoundest philosophy of

life, and gratified his artistic tastes by introducing a great variety of artifices and tricks of style, which deepen the unity of effect of his pieces by reflecting in the rhetoric some leading feature of the plot, some striking thought involved in the organic idea, or by preparing our imaginations for the reception of some improbability in the story. In "Twelfth Night" the entanglements of the plot are all occasioned by Viola's disguise, and the *dénouement* is happily brought about by the perfect resemblance between herself and her twin brother, Sebastian. This freak of nature is not a very violent improbability in a comedy, which transports us into the realm of fancy, and which is itself an ideal of a fiction. The incident is found in the old story; but the poet, with consummate art, blends it with the profoundest meaning of his play. As he uses it, it becomes typical of that resemblance which is aimed at by all imitative art. The perception of this duality, copy and original, or coexistence of likeness and difference, seems to be the source of the pleasure which the mind takes in imitation, as well as in similes, metaphors, and almost every exercise of wit and fancy. The *twin-hood*, therefore (to coin a word), which is inherent in all mimicry and fictitious representation, and which is exemplified in Sebastian and Viola, —

> "*One face, one voice, one habit,* and *two persons,*
> A *natural* perspective, THAT IS AND IS NOT,"

is itself imitated in the rhetoric of the piece by

yoking together tautological words and phrases, such as "suppli'd and fill'd," "quaffing and drinking," "coward and coystril," "old and antique," "unstaid and skittish," "giddy and unfirm," "wonder not nor admire," "rogue and villain," "retention and restraint," "waves and surges," "base and ground," "fell and cruel," and a great many others. These pairs of words, when not strictly pleonastic, are *quasi* pleonastic, and contain the same meaning, as the genus does the species, — such as "soft and tender," "racked and tortured," "green and yellow," "memorials and things of fame," "most jealous and too doubtful," "scoundrels and substractors," "geck and gull," "no quarrel nor no brawl," etc, etc. Observe, too, that the title of the play is a double one.

Life in "Twelfth Night" is all concrete. The characters indulge in no abstractions; they have no inner life that is not manifested in bodily deportment. The carriage of the body, the expression and play of feature, movement and posture, dancing, walking, personal manners and accomplishments, are notions that are constantly brought before us. With what skill is Sir Toby, a gentleman by birth, but debased by long habits of vulgar dissipation, made to patch his discourse with scraps of Latin and other tongues, with here and there a blundering learned allusion — the shabby remnant of that culture of letters which his social position had given him, and hard drinking had not quite obliterated. The *dramatis personæ* show

the practical nature of their habits of life by their metaphors, which are drawn from hunting, fowling, hawking, sports and games, familiarity with animals, and customary use of dogs and horses. Even the refined Olivia draws a figure from the bear-garden. Man is considered, too, as subject to the elements.

"*Sir Toby.* Do not our lives consist of the four elements?

Sir Andrew. *Faith*, so they say, but I think it rather consists of *eating* and *drinking*.

Sir To. Thou art a *scholar;* let us, therefore, *eat* and *drink*."

And so finished is this work of art, so exhaustive the thought, and so fertile the fancy of its author, that even the old astrological theory of the predominance of the constellations over the bodies of men is not omitted.

"*Sir Toby.* Were we not *born* under *Taurus?*

Sir Andrew. Taurus? that's *sides* and *heart*.

Sir To. No, sir, it is *legs* and *thighs*. Let me see thee caper; ha! *higher;* ha, ha! *excellent*."

It is by these minute and skillful touches, and through this inexhaustible wealth of fancy and knowledge, that every related thought is brought before the mind, and the whole play informed with one and the same idea. The race of critics, who look upon Shakespeare as a rude, unlettered genius, is believed to have passed away; but there are many at this day, who, regarding him as an artist, still conceive that he produced his effects by a happy audacity, and by a secret, intuitive per-

ception of what was beautiful and harmonious. But "Twelfth Night" refutes all such suppositions. Its theme is Genius, and its law is Taste. And, if we look more closely, we perceive that the poet is always master of his subject, always holds his rhetoric in hand; and that his effects are wrought out with all the painstaking of a worker in mosaic. In fact, they are elaborated as highly as the flesh-tints of Titian, or the outlines of Praxiteles. They are the result of innumerable minute touches; and Shakespeare, the thinker, supervising and giving laws to Shakespeare, the poet, uses the fire and rapture of his verse and the sparkle of his wit as simple vehicles of the profounder thought that is in him.

HAMLET.

THE tragedy of "Hamlet," in its present form, was written by Shakespeare at about the same period of his life, and possibly in the same year, that he produced "Twelfth Night," yet no two plays could be more strongly contrasted. In fact, they may be considered correlatives or opposites, in the same sense that tragedy and comedy are correlated, and the idea of one is suggestive of the idea of the other.

In "Twelfth Night," man is represented as a mere creature of sense and fancy, with whom the whole business of life is the pursuit of pleasure and the gratification of appetite. Engrossed in his sensual nature, he takes no thought beyond the present hour. Over man thus constituted, the controlling power is chance, which, from the comic point of view, wears the aspect of that capricious and sportive goddess, Fortune, who, by a turn of her wheel and regardless of consequences, delights in baffling or in aiding human designs. This picture of life results in ideal comedy.

At the opposite pole of the dramatic world stands "Hamlet," the profoundest of tragedies. It represents the downfall and ruin of that which

is greatest and noblest in man, through inherent error and the fatal rebound of his own guilt. This principle is the basis of all Shakespearian tragedy; but, while, in his other dramas, Shakespeare portrays the guilt that overwhelms the tragic hero, as modified by adventitious circumstances, and as excited by some passion which seeks a personal end in an external good or gratification, in "Hamlet" he depicts the error as entirely subjective, as a *habit of the mind*, and as having its seat in the soul itself. The play, therefore, exemplifies the tragic principle in its most abstract and comprehensive form, and, on that account, may be considered an exponent of the elements and principles of tragedy itself.

"Hamlet" unfolds a view of life, in which man is regarded in the light of his moral accountability, and in his relations to duty and eternity. It represents him as essentially rational and spiritual in his nature; as a being endowed with an immortal soul, in comparison with the value and dignity of which the perishable body, with its low instincts and desires, sinks into a nothingness of dust and ashes. It portrays him in his grandeur and in his weakness; as possessed of sublime capabilities, but diseased and corrupted by sin; and sets forth the misery and death that follow upon any great disturbance of that perfect balance which should exist, by means of the sovereignty of the reason, between all his diverse faculties, whether such disturbance be occasioned

by predominance of passion, by morbid excess of thought, by vicious habit, or by whatsoever departure from the supreme rule of right, fitness, and reason. In a word, it opens to our view the tragic horrors involved in the sinfulness of the soul, and assumes as its radical idea that all error is self-destructive, and that whosoever attempts to sustain or bolster it must be crushed by its inevitable recoil. In "Hamlet" we do not judge the characters merely by their ostensible motives, as revealed in what they say or do, but we are admitted into the secret chambers and counsels of their hearts, and see them as they stand self-condemned before their own accusing consciences. We scan in them the bosom sins, the load of guilt, the wicked designs, the secret ends and purposes of the scheming brain, which all men endeavor to hide in themselves and to discover in others; so that life, in the collision of passions and interests, seems but a game in which he is the most skillful who can best perplex others with his own riddle, while he plucks out the heart of their mystery. Thought and passion, as here exhibited, though interesting from the mutual relations of the characters, are chiefly so, however, from their reaction upon the individuals themselves. Hamlet's excessive meditativeness, Ophelia's incautious love, the king's guilty schemes, the queen's criminal passion, the inconsiderate anger of Laertes, even the obsequiousness of Rosencrantz and his fellow, all point their

moral in the misery and ruin they bring upon these parties respectively. As passion expires through its own vehemence; as thought, by excess, baffles its ultimate end, which is action, so does man, by transgression, ever become the agent of his own destruction. Guilt and woe, sin and death, — the elements of tragedy, — are inseparable; and in view of man's culpability, the providence of God is seen as a moral necessity that governs the world like a fate, which, in very mockery of man's devices, operates by delivering over all human affairs to the seeming empire of chance; but chance, here no longer the whimsical goddess that presides over comedy, is only another name for those preordained coincidences among the numberless series of causes and effects, which, woven into infinite complications, constitute the mighty scheme of things, of which God alone knows the purpose or can see the beginning or the end. "There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow," and

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

In our endeavors to escape the consequences of our guilt, or make amends for a deficient performance of duty, by some subtle contrivance of the brain, we forget that we oppose ourselves to the mass and aggregate of all the forces of the universe. The justice of God will not be outwitted. When we think to shape the course of events and evade retribution, our deepest plots are

overthrown by the merest accidents, and we are shattered into dust by the recoil of our own guilty purposes on our heads.

> "Our wills and fates do so contrary run,
> That our devices still are overthrown.
> Our thoughts are ours; their ends none of their own.
> *Act III. Sc.* 2.

Hence, all the main movements and incidents of the play are fortuitous, and have no necessary connection. The visit of Horatio, the arrival of the players, the death of Polonius, the capture of Hamlet by pirates, the queen's mistake in drinking of the poisoned cup, the drowning of Ophelia, the exchange of the foils, all are results of chance, yet all coöperate to a predestined end. Even the king's death, by the hand of Hamlet, is, so far as time, place, and manner are concerned, entirely without premeditation. The spring and source of the action is the horrible murder of his brother by Claudius. Out of this act, as from a black pool of guilt, flow all the tragic issues of the play; and out of it rise, also, the dark designs and deadly stratagems the characters meditate towards each other. The king schemes to evade retribution and to destroy Hamlet; Hamlet schemes to expose the guilt and take the life of the king; Polonius schemes to unmask Hamlet's secret; Laertes schemes to avenge his father's death; all is plot and counter-plot, and all ends in a sudden and violent death overtaking the plotters in the very moment that success seems

about to crown their secret designs. Horatio, who, of all the *dramatis personæ*, is the only one represented as a "just" man, alone escapes the doom that swallows up all the others in an abyss, which seems to open on a sudden beneath their feet, but which, in fact, all had aided in preparing. The moral is obvious: our only safety lies in an unquestioning performance of duty, and in leaving the consequences to God. In vain does the Finite struggle with the Infinite. This is the simple lesson taught by this profound tragedy — a tragedy which sets forth the grandeur of the mind and soul, but a grandeur in ruins; which depicts man as of angelic strength and godlike apprehension, yet, after all, but the quintessence of dust, who, in his self-sufficiency and the pride of his intellect attempts, by shallow devices, to "circumvent God," to substitute evasive cunning for the performance of duty, and reconcile sin to the conscience by the subtleties of his mind, yet baffled and broken by the inevitable reaction that lurks in all guilt. This representation has the profoundest interest for us, for in Hamlet we see ourselves, and recognize in the struggle that distracts his bosom a type of the ceaseless war betwixt passion and duty that is waging in our own souls.

The moral truths adopted by Shakespeare, as organic ideas of his plays, being the principles which regulate or which ought to regulate man's daily life, they are those which, of all others, are

most familiar to the mind; and to evolve and set forth in detail the consequences and corollaries that flow from them, is but to state a series of commonplaces and truisms. This is especially true of "Hamlet," which, though presenting a special aspect of life, still rests upon a principle of such breadth as to possess universal interest and application, inasmuch as it is the foundation of morality and natural religion. Yet, trite as the statement may prove, it is necessary to set forth this organic idea and the notions comprehended under it, as otherwise it would be difficult to point out the skill and method by which form is given to the piece as a whole and to every part. The words italicized are those which may be taken as radicals in the vocabulary of the play; and in quotations all words which may be classed under such radicals are also printed in italics.

In "Hamlet," man is represented as an intellectual and moral being in relation to Divine Providence. From this point of view he is regarded in his private and single personality, and in his moral accountability to God. Of life viewed under this relation, the rule necessarily assumes the broadest form and is obviously found in the *sovereignty* of the *reason*, which, as the light of the *conscience* and the interpreter of the Divine *will*, possesses no less authority than the voice of God himself. The supremacy of the *conscience* is evinced in perfect *temperance* or *self-government* in the exercise of every faculty,

and in the strict *observance* of *right*, no less in inward *purpose* than in outward *act*. This rule of morality forbids all *error*, whether through *excess* (or trespass) on the one side or *defect* (or shortcoming) on the other; and requires nothing more and nothing less than the performance of every *duty* both to others and to ourselves. So long as this rule is observed, all the faculties, mental and active, are held in just equipoise; the desires and affections are subordinate to the reason, which alone governs the will, and the will, in turn, urges to action and the performance of duty, while the understanding or faculty of abstracting and generalizing, of foresight and contrivance, is exercised only in the prosecution of ends which are sanctioned by the conscience, and which, consequently, are in unison with the designs of Providence. Such obedience, moreover, argues a perfect *sanity* of *mind* and *soul*, and raises man to the highest *dignity*, for to obey the conscience is to act with reference to moral ends, and in this lies the true *greatness* of man.

But this obedience is thwarted, and this balance destroyed by the *corrupt nature* and *carnal mind* of man, from which originates all error, but especially that pride of intellect which, assuming to judge of good and evil, and relying on its own strength to forecast *consequences* and shape *events*, disregards the commands of conscience, and seeks, by *craft* and *contrivance*, to attain its ends so adroitly as to avoid all responsibility for results.

Of all forms of sin, this is the most deep, subtle, and deadly; it wears innumerable phases, and comprises all manner of guile and sophism, but it is particularly conspicuous in those dark and treacherous machinations by which secret ends are sought to be accomplished as if by the operation of *chance*. But such efforts, in the long run, are necessarily futile, as they are attempts to palm off the malevolent designs of man for purposes of the Divine will; for what is called chance, is but the working of God's providence, whose infinite agencies, operating upon a scale inconceivably beyond the reaches of human thought, render calculation ridiculous, and thwart the profoundest devices of man by the most trifling and unexpected contingencies.

The mind, likewise, is prolific of pretexts to justify neglect of duty, and invents shufflings and evasions without number, to prevent the detection or avert the punishment of guilt. Every individual carries in his secret bosom purposes that nothing will tempt him to reveal; and the intercourse of life, even in the closest and most intimate relations, is marked by insincerity and false pretense; while nothing is more gratifying to human pride than the exultation the successful schemer feels at his superiority over his dupe. In short, men look far more frequently for a rule of conduct to their craft of mind than to the admonitions of conscience; but these last being the commands of God, disobedience to them is logi-

cally punishable by Divine justice. In "Hamlet," therefore, the most flagrant guilt is not regarded as crime, for which the perpetrator is amenable to human law, but as *sin*, or an inward corruption of the will, for which, whether taking form in outward act or not, he is accountable to God. The play does not portray open acts of crime and violence, but hidden sins and covert villainies, for which retribution is effected through that immutable law of *action and reaction*, which corrects every disturbance of the order of the moral world by entangling error in its own snares, and destroying transgression by its own recoil. The representation is one of wicked devices and occulted guilt, of baffled schemes and providential retribution, or, in the summary of Horatio, —

> "Of *carnal*, bloody, and *unnatural acts*,
> Of *accidental judgments*, *casual slaughters*,
> Of *deaths* put on by *cunning* and *forc'd cause*,
> And, in this upshot, *purposes mistook*
> *Fall'n on the inventors' heads.*"

These trite truths are the moral ground of the sublime ideal picture of the diseased will and fallen soul of man presented by this tragedy. The organic idea is that fundamental law of morality which enjoins an implicit obedience to the conscience — or practical reason — as a rule of life. This law, therefore, and the consequences that flow from its observance or its infraction, will be embodied in the characters illustrated in the incidents and reflected in the diction of the piece.

Though, in its broadest statement, it embraces every form of error arising from want of self-government, yet it gives a special aspect to life, as here portrayed, by being chiefly restricted to that class of errors which spring from pride of intellect and a reliance upon the cunning of the mind to scheme so deeply as to evade alike the obligations of duty and the penalties of sin. This misuse and perversion of the speculative intellect — with its infirmities, its want of balance, and its liability to disease and decay — as a guide of life, instead of the moral sense, are exemplified in all the leading parts of the piece, with the exception of Horatio and Ophelia, the first of whom is a type of a well-balanced mental and moral nature: —

> "A man that Fortune's *buffets* and *rewards*
> Has ta'en with *equal* thanks,"

and the latter, an impersonation of duty and obedience.

It must be premised that in the analysis of the characters, no attempt is made to point out their beauty or grandeur as dramatic or poetical creations, the object of the present exegesis being only to trace, if possible, the organic law of the piece in the ground-plan of the characters, and thus exhibit the method by which they are placed in harmonious relation to one central idea, and so drawn into organic unity.

The most conspicuous embodiment of the exaltation of the intellectual over the moral is found

in Hamlet, the hero of the play. His character and career illustrate fully the idea that error or transgression is self-destructive, and that the intellect strives in vain to set aside the dictates of conscience, or furnish a plan by which guilt may be incurred and its responsibilities evaded.

Hamlet possesses the very highest qualities, both intellectual and moral, with which man can be endowed, but with one great radical defect; he is wanting in self-government. Through this deficiency, he falls — almost imperceptibly to himself — into an invincible habit of allowing both thought and feeling to transgress their due bounds and run into excesses that defeat their own proper end, which is action in the line of duty. The balance of his mind is thus destroyed. His excesses of thought end only in empty speculation; his excesses of feeling, in vehement but transient excitement; in neither case do they furnish a motive to the will, and he, consequently, loses all power of deliberate action. In the exercise, therefore, of his highest qualities, — whether of his sensibility or logical faculties, which transgress on the one side, or of his will, which falls short and becomes imbecile on the other, — Hamlet is a striking example of the force of *habit*. But habit governs human conduct, and is indicative of morals; for virtues and vices are habits, and conversely, habits are either good or bad, virtuous or vicious. And we may therefore regard Hamlet as the representative of man, the transgressor, who,

losing the balance of his faculties, diverges, either through excess or defect, into error, and habitually violates the rule of right and reason.

To expand this idea of the character somewhat, and trace its dramatic development: Hamlet is the most comprehensive generalization of humanity. No prejudice or bias resulting from position or condition in life, no marked nationality, no creed, no school, no class-feeling or sentiment, exercises any strong influence on his character. That Hamlet's morality should be governed by Christian ethics is necessary to the effective development of the character — and the poet, therefore, heedless of the anachronism, if there be anachronism in the world of the imagination, has made the Denmark of a pagan era a Christian land, as is distinctly marked in the purgatorial penance of the ghost, and more particularly in the holiness attributed to the Christmas season; just as, on the other hand, he has introduced the University of Wittenberg, which, from its connection with Luther and the Reformation, is suggestive of free thought and the emancipation of the human mind from dogma and authority; but that Hamlet himself was a Christian, or a prince, or even a Dane, we should scarcely learn from any coloring these facts give his views or opinions. His intellect is highly cultured, but reflects no particular tenet. All that he thinks or utters, has reference to those great problems and fundamental topics, — such as immortality, death, duty, free will, human

frailty, which have a common interest for all men. He may be said to represent the human mind in its universality, with its spirit of doubt and inquiry, its confidence in its own powers, its aversion to plodding for practical ends, and its delight in freedom and abstraction. He represents, too, the human soul, unfortified by faith or fixed religious principles — yet with its conscientiousness and yearnings for good, its sensibility and capacity for suffering, its mysterious presentiments, its shifting play of emotion, its taint of sin, and its struggle with the powers of evil. Neither pagan nor Christian, but philosophic, he reveals in his nature at once the inappeasable skepticism of the human mind and the soul's intuitive consciousness of its own immortality. This epitome and impersonation of the higher nature of man, however, is not a mere abstraction, but rather impresses us with a deeper sense of individuality than any other character in the Shakespearian drama. The frailty of man, though drawn in Hamlet with such breadth as to become a type of the fallen nature of the race, is yet exhibited as circumstanced in the individual. The son of a warlike king, who has maintained his title by slaying a rival monarch in single combat, Hamlet is, of course, accomplished in the use of arms, but he is not a soldier. Nor, though bred in courts and possessing courtly manners, is he a courtier. His life has been chiefly devoted to intellectual culture, and he is preëminently a

thinker. His nature is a noble one. With a sensibility intense as his mind is powerful, the range of his sympathies is as wide as the sweep of his thoughts. His ideal of human character is of the most exalted type. His feelings are warm, his sentiments elevated and dignified, and he is both physically and morally brave; yet he is impatient in temper, rash in action, often guilty of conduct we not only cannot approve, but find it difficult to palliate or excuse, and incapable, through habits of mind which have impaired his moral energy, of acting any great part in the drama of life. So far from being able to reach his own ideal, he falls short of adequately filling that sphere of duty to which fate assigns him. A *want of self-government* destroys the efficacy of his great powers. He places no restraint on either thought or feeling, and his sensibilities are as overwrought as his speculations are over-refined. On the one hand, morbidly meditative and habitually passing from the particular fact to the general reflection, he escapes from the practical into the speculative, and has acquired, through a fondness for abstraction, an invincible repugnance to active affairs; while, on the other hand, his impatient temper, rendered doubly irritable by want of training in the trials of practical life, is held in no check, but hurries him away into bursts of passion that blaze high for a moment, but are quickly burned out through their own violence. His reason not only does not curb within due

bounds his other faculties, but does not set just limits to itself. Lost in interminable casuistry, it has unsettled its own principles of judgment, and rests in no ultimate conclusion, whilst his passions are too short-lived in their ungoverned vehemence, to afford a persistent motive to the will. A nature thus diseased by habit, must be deficient in purpose. Neither amid logical subtleties nor fitful passions can there dwell the earnestness which alone prompts the will to the performance of those great undertakings that require the collective energies of the whole man. Even where a great duty is greatly performed, and moral principle is the spring of action, the motive derives energy from deep feeling. Indeed, a love of duty is at times a passion that runs into fanaticism. But Hamlet, though excitable to the verge of frenzy, possesses no practical zeal nor working enthusiasm. The affections, which are merely emotional, requiring no active effort for their exercise, he indulges to excess. Witness his immoderate grief at his father's death, — so forcibly rebuked by the uncle-king, — his love for Ophelia, as expressed at her grave; but he is too unstable to entertain a deep and steady feeling which, as an impulse, can carry forward the will to decisive action in the execution of a deliberate resolve. For, in such a matter, the judgment must decide and rest in some conviction; but Hamlet's mind, constantly overshooting the limits of a sound discretion, refines, and wire-draws, and speculates on

the consequences of an act, until the ardor that should have lent strength to the will is dissipated in thought. His nature is so mobile from the want of self-control that neither passion nor principle rule his conduct as a permanent spring of action. When he acts at all, it is from sudden and momentary impulse, never in pursuance of a fixed plan; and, at such times, he is as rash and headlong in conduct as at others he is weak and dilatory. Through excess of meditation, he is inert; through excess of feeling, he is precipitate; in both extremes, we mark the same want of temperance and self-government, the same ill-regulated mind and passions.

It will be observed that the balance of Hamlet's mind has not been disturbed by the illusions of the imagination, nor by excess of sentiment, nor is he perverted by criminal passion or appetite: on the contrary, he abhors sensuality, and all his sympathies lean to virtue's side. His disease is far more deep; it is seated in the very core of his moral nature. His governing reason, no longer true to its office, has usurped its own authority, — the speculative over the practical, the discursive over the moral, — and has ceased to give law to the man, who becomes the mere creature of impulse. As Hamlet is the most generic man, so are his failings of the most generic type. They have their origin in a defect of character, which potentially involves all error, that is, a want of self-government, and this, in his case, in the very gov-

erning power, the reason, which loses its office of judge through its excessive activity as disputant, and forfeits its prerogative of governing the man by failing to govern itself. This exaltation of the intellectual over the moral, or, to use the language of the play, "the discourse of reason" over "the conscience" is error in its essence. It confounds all moral distinctions, and when pushed to extremes, includes the deepest sin in relation to the soul, — for it converts duty and obligation into a mere logical thesis, — and the greatest insanity in relation to the intellect — for it imparts to the figments of the mind an apparent reality. In Hamlet it by no means reaches such extremes, for though by questioning the primary truths of conscience, his mind seems, at times, to drift from its mooring and exhibit a taint of insanity, yet it never, but in one instance (at the grave of Ophelia), quite loses its hold on common sense; and his heart is too pure and his impulses too honest to be beguiled by reasoning, however specious, into crime, — still his deep-seated infirmity saps his great powers and mingles an element of weakness in all he undertakes. This characteristic, moreover, when found in a nature of the very greatest compass of thought and feeling, will manifest itself, necessarily, in a versatility of mind and a variability of mood, marked by extremes so wide as to appear altogether paradoxical and contradictory. Such it appears in Hamlet; in him the vivacity and play of passion and

intellect are all the more conspicuous from excess of action; and are depicted as having such range and sweep as to cause us to wonder at the profundity of being in which diversities so wide can repose in unity.

These characteristics are brought out with the utmost force by the dilemma in which Hamlet is placed. He is called from the University of Wittenburg by the sudden death of the king, his father, whom he had idolized as a pattern of heroic virtue. Though the monarchy of Denmark was an elective one, yet Hamlet, as son of the king, might naturally suppose that he would be named as his father's successor; but his claims are thrust aside by the craft and court intrigues of his uncle, his father's brother, a man of great ability as a politician, but utterly abhorred by Hamlet for his gross and sensual vices. However deep a blow the loss of the crown may have been to his pride, it was, perhaps, no very grievous disappointment to his ambition; for, though like all men of superior minds, Hamlet has the sentiment of ambition, the desire of making his superiority felt, yet his mental habits have engendered in him the greatest aversion to practical affairs, and he is, moreover, one "who can be bounded in a nutshell and count himself a king of infinite space;" but his filial reverence, and all the best feelings of his over-sensitive nature, are horribly shocked by his mother's marriage to his uncle almost immediately after his father's decease.

This dexterous posting to incestuous sheets afflicts him most poignantly, and causes him to look upon his mother with contempt. It argues her debasement and worthlessness, and comes near to blotting out in his mind all faith in woman's virtue forever. It awakens, too, a dark suspicion that there has been foul play both towards his father and himself. Sickened by what he sees of corruption and depravity in those most near to him, he becomes a prey to that weariness of existence which attends a want of an object in life, and a knowledge of the moral meanness and poverty of the world. But with characteristic inertness, he is prompted to no effort; his feelings are but a theme for soliloquy, and he resigns himself passively to the event.

> "It is not, nor it cannot come to good;
> But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue."

Whilst in this frame of mind, weary of life, disgusted with the world, and brooding over his wounded feelings, he is suddenly startled from his melancholy and his meditations by an apparition from the world beyond the grave. His father's spirit appears to him, and, bringing back from the flames of purgatory the vindictive passions of earth, informs him, in a narrative calculated to excite his deepest horror and pity, that his father had been murdered and his mother corrupted by the king, his uncle; and enjoins upon him, with the most solemn and affecting appeals to his filial love, and his regard for the honor of their royal

house, to avenge his death. This command, aside from the effect so awful an interview with the supernatural must ever after have upon his spirit, throws over his future life the darkest gloom. To act upon it is to subvert all his previous propensities and habits. It is to take him, at once, from the quiet and seclusion of a contemplative life, and throw him into scenes of the greatest excitement, activity, and danger, requiring the utmost vigilance and energy to conduct to a successful issue. It is, moreover, an act of the darkest criminality, and likely to stain his good name in this world, and jeopard the welfare of his eternal soul in the next. To avenge his father's death, he must commit a murder, —

"*Murder most foul*, AS IN THE BEST IT IS,"

as the vindictive Apparition had himself declared. Still the injunction, repulsive as it is to his moral nature, comes to him from an authority scarce less to be heeded than a command from Heaven itself. Never before was there such a question for a casuist; never before was there such a casuist to handle it as Hamlet! Obviously a contest must arise in Hamlet's nature between this "dread command," which speaks as with the voice of another conscience on the one hand, and his moral sense on the other. Over Hamlet's *feelings*, the injunction of the Ghost is omnipotent; it is enforced with all the awe and impressiveness the supernatural can inspire, and it is hallowed by some

of the finest sentiments and sympathies of his nature; yet there is that in it which, just in proportion as it is imperative and stimulating to his sense of duty, awakens conscientious scruples against it. He is distracted, as it were, between the dictates of a double conscience, and by the call of opposing duties, so that the mandate appears, by turns, a temptation to commit a crime or a duty enjoined by Heaven. He is thus set at war in the very citadel of his soul. So great is the contradiction in his nature, that some of his purest and holiest feelings urge him to the commission of the crime, while his vicious mental habits and defects of character lend their influence to the side of virtue. In vain does he call upon his reason to settle the conflict. Reason, which should be but the reflex of the Supreme Reason in his soul, and authoritatively pronounce from the throne of conscience the rule of duty, stops, in the vanity of human wit, to speculate on what duty is, and, lost amid doubts of its own creating, can supply no rule to guide him in his distressing perplexity. Instead of discovering a principle to determine his action, he finds only pretexts for a postponement of his purpose, or excuses that may give a conscientious coloring to his inertness. His device of the play is only to defer, under an affected doubt of the veracity of the Ghost, the necessity of action; and he refrains from striking the blow when the king is at his prayers, under still more far-fetched scruples, lest revenge, taken at such a moment,

should be incommensurate with the injury. His repugnance to action shelters itself behind the doubts of his conscience, and these, in turn, redouble the mental activity, which is the cause of such repugnance. Thus, out of the very exuberance of his thought, he defeats the end for which he thinks. Striving to find some ground for definite action, he reinforces the habit which holds him inactive. In fact, he never even approaches a solution. The behest of the Ghost serves only to oppress him with a dreadful sense of responsibility; it does not and cannot alter his habits, nor reform his character. With intellect in excess, he can fix on no plan; with sensibility in excess, he can rest in no purpose; meanwhile he is tortured with a sense of neglected duty, resolves and re-resolves to let no further opportunities pass without action, yet every occasion finds him unprepared, and drifting further and further away from the accomplishment of his design. A skillful analyst of his own mind, he clearly perceives that his excessive thoughtfulness neutralizes his resolves, but he does not perceive — what habit has rendered to him a second nature — that his want of self-discipline and fixed principle has so far impaired his moral force, that he has not left him the strength of will to abandon the injunction of the Ghost as a sinful one, nor the persistent ardor of purpose that can shove by all conscientious scruples and perform the deed at all hazards. His conscience, distracted by habits of casuistry,

has not force enough to annul the authority of the apparition; and his will, distracted by transient impulses, is unable to override the conscience. He has neither the rigid virtue of the saint, nor the audacity of the villain, but, like the great mass of mankind, is an erring mortal, who yields to impulse and evades the calls of duty by ingenious pretexts; who endeavors to hush self-upbraidings by promises of future amendment, but who ever falls back under the influence of habit; who is torn with doubts and conflicting motives, because duty prompts him to one course, and passion to another; who endeavors to reconcile self-love with his duty towards God and man, and ends in the intensest egotism; who is conscious of the greatness and dignity of his own nature, yet feels and disdains his own frailty; who wounds through ungoverned passion those that best love him, and who mistakes his own self-dissatisfaction at a life without results for the emptiness and vanity of life itself; and an act of the deepest criminality, drawing after it the most momentous consequences, having been enjoined upon him by an authority he cannot disregard, his demoralized, yet scrupulous nature is held in equipoise between the dallyings with guilt and the warnings of conscience, until enmities, aroused by his own rash acts and ineffectual stratagems, anticipate his protracted design and insure his death.

It is evident that Hamlet's perplexities arise

from the influence of the supernatural over his mind. The introduction of the Ghost[1] is a stroke of profound skill, both because a disembodied spirit, as one of the *dramatis personæ* in a play of which the mind and soul of man are the proper theme, heightens the metaphysical tone of the piece, and because this element was necessary in order to furnish the condition under which Hamlet's mind could be held in suspense between contradictory impulses throughout the play, and the character rendered a type of humanity struggling between good and evil.

Nothing less than the dread and pity inspired by the majestic Shade, whose story had sunk into his heart and stirred his nature to its profoundest depths, united with the natural desire of punishing the wrongs done his father, his mother, and himself, could have prevailed to hold Hamlet up to the work against his moral scruples, his skeptical turn of mind, and his habits of inaction. But these counteracting forces are so nicely and ingeniously balanced, that his will is virtually paralyzed. Had he been created without a will, he could not be more unable to determine his course than he

[1] There is little doubt that before Shakespeare wrote his tragedy there was an older "Hamlet," in which the Ghost was introduced; but we may be sure that the *character* of the Ghost and the use to which he is put is Shakespeare's own. Shakespeare's creative power and originality were not less manifest in the new life and significance he breathed into the characters and incidents of the stories and plays from which he drew his plots than in what proceeded from his own invention.

is rendered by the endless conflict of motives in his soul.

In this dilemma, driven onward by filial piety and the instigations of hell, by "excitements of his reason and his blood," plucked back by conscience and habit, incapable of either receding or advancing, he trusts to his intellect, of the great power of which he is conscious, to reconcile these incompatible duties and evade responsibility by so shaping events that the death of the king shall be effected through the agency of chance. He thus hopes to hit upon a plan of committing a murder without wounding his conscience, but in vain. Neither logic nor craft can reconcile foul practice with duty, nor remove doubts which are rooted in the moral sense. The attempt can result only in endless skepticism and fruitless cogitation. On this course the truisms and platitudes of Polonius are the best comment: —

> "My liege and madam, to *expostulate*
> What majesty should be, *what duty is*,
> Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
> Were *nothing but to waste night, day, and time.*"

Thus the dilemma, in which Hamlet is placed, aggravates and develops all the faults and vicious habits of his character. With a case of conscience to solve, he goes to his intellect to decide it, but his mind can do nothing but refine and spin out deductions, which are of no avail unless some spring of action be touched, and the moral force stand ready to coöperate; so that Hamlet be-

comes a striking illustration of the idea that lies at the bottom of the poet's design, — that the intellect, of which man is so proud and so confident, is not only utterly incompetent, through its logical faculties, to contravene a moral rule; that not only is all philosophy vain, all merely speculative thought barren of aid and strength to man in his combats with the powers of evil, but that all mental efforts to supersede or evade the obligations of duty and, by some reach of cunning, to incur guilt without violating the conscience, end only in impotence and self-destruction. In Hamlet's case, the display of intellectual strength educed by this warfare in his soul is prodigious, but this only places in stronger relief the worthlessness of the most astonishing efforts of genius unguided by moral principle.

In the conscious plenitude of his strength, Hamlet feels a certain consolation for his want of decision; he hopes to compensate by energy of brain for what he lacks in determination of purpose; he treads fearlessly among his enemies, though he knows they are devising his destruction, as he feels himself secure in his ability to out-scheme and undermine them all. He will —

> "have the *engineer*
> *Hoist with his own petar*, and it shall go hard
> But he will delve one yard below their mines
> And blow them at the moon,"

and is ever expecting by some deep piece of craft, by some premeditated accident, as it were, some

well devised chance, to effect the death of the king without incurring responsibility. How fortunate had he killed the king, instead of Polonius, when skillfully seizing, as he thinks, his opportunity, he makes a blind thrust of his sword through the arras! But how rash his conduct! Had he reflected a moment, he would have remembered that he had just left the king at his prayers. In *thought*, a murder is a mere trifle, —

> "And a man's life no more than to say — one,"

but when the occasion offers, and the hour of action strikes, all his deep thinking is insufficient to nerve his arm or silence his conscience, and, at best, can only aid him by inventing some plausible excuse for letting go by the acting of his resolve. In his attempts to make chance subserve his ends, he himself becomes so very a plaything of chance, that, when finally he strikes the decisive blow, it is not in execution of his long-cherished purpose, but in a fit of resentment at the treachery that had been practiced upon him by means of the poisoned foil; it is in retaliation of the injury done himself rather than that done his father, and, instead of obeying the mandate of the Ghost, or the determination of his own mind, he is here, as elsewhere, but "the scourge and minister of Heaven." It is in this impotency of will and pride of intellect that Hamlet becomes a representative of man, — rational, responsible, and erring man, — who, in his arrogance, thinks to

scale heaven itself, yet whose weakness and frailty are made apparent in his inability to accomplish anything save as an instrument of a higher power, and whose profoundest schemes are overthrown by incidents apparently accidental, but which, in fact, are preordained events in God's stupendous plan and order of things.

There are two causes of perplexity in an analysis of the character of Hamlet; one springing from the grandeur of Hamlet's intellect, the other from the character of the Ghost.

All mankind admire intellectual superiority. No supremacy is so much coveted, or awakens so much admiration, as that of mental endowments. And the achievements in all departments of thought of those who have illustrated the powers of the human mind until man seems but "little lower than the angels," excite our pride that we belong to an order of beings that can exhibit faculties so sublime. Hamlet produces the same effect upon us. We regard him as an ideal of the greatness of man's intellect; we believe him capable of achieving whatever he chooses to undertake, and, throughout the play, we look to him for the development of some profound scheme which shall confound the uncle-king, and annihilate him in the most masterly manner. We are, therefore, slow to perceive that it is this very intellect, of which Hamlet and all men are so proud, that the dramatist holds up as wholly factitious and worthless in all matters involving a question

of duty; that conscience is our only guide, and our moral being all that has substance, permanence, or worth in our nature. There are vastly "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our *philosophy*." One pure heart knows more of truth than can be found in all the schools; and in "Hamlet," is brought to the test the boasted intellect of man, and found empty of worth except when acting in due subordination to moral principle. It is a weapon which, if not rightly used, inflicts its most deadly wound on him who wields it.

By a similar delusion, we are blinded to Hamlet's defects of character. Such defects permit, nay, occasion a dazzling display of intellect that so wins our admiration, and exhibit a range of sensibility that so awakens our sympathy, that we fail to see that all this splendor of character is obtained at the expense of moral weakness, and that Hamlet lacks the first essential of morality, the girdle of self-restraint, that should bind up his faculties compactly together, give them one end and aim, and prevent them from squandering themselves all abroad in wasteful and purposeless extravagance. His general rectitude of principle and purity of sentiment make us believe that, however inordinate his excitements or fine-spun his speculations, they originate in good motives and point to good ends.

The Ghost, likewise, is so drawn as to conceal his real character under a garb of virtue. It was

necessary that the poet should harmonize dramatic effect with philosophical truth; the one requiring that the Ghost should catch our sympathies, the other that he should be a spirit of evil. His majestical aspect, his piteous story, the reverence we feel for his heroic life, and the lofty tone of morality he discloses in the recital of the wrongs he has suffered and the torments he endures, together with the awe and authority we attach to a messenger from the world beyond the grave, prevent our feeling that his errand is a malignant one, and that it is a deadly sin he enjoins upon his son as a duty he is bound to perform.

"*Hamlet.* Speak, I am *bound to hear.*
Ghost. So *art thou to revenge,* when thou shalt hear."

And this injunction is enforced by an appeal to the natural passions of Hamlet's heart. "If thou hast *nature* in thee, *bear it not.*" And this, again, is rendered all the more significant by the distinction made between the punishment of Claudius and that of the Queen: —

"But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
Taint not thy *mind*, nor let thy *soul contrive*
Against thy mother aught. *Leave her to heaven,*
And to those *thorns that in her bosom lodge*
To prick and sting her."

But if the pangs of conscience were sufficient punishment for the Queen, why not also for Claudius?

The guiltiness of the Ghost is emphasized and

somewhat dwelt upon in the first scene, in which he appears: —

"*Bernardo.* It was about to speak, when the cock crew.
Horatio. And then *it started like a guilty thing*
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
The cock, that is trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day! and at his *warning*,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The *extravagant and erring spirit hies*
To his confine; and of the *truth herein*
The present object made probation.
Marcellus. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever *'gainst that season comes*
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long,
And then, they say, *no spirit dares walk abroad*
. . . . . .
So *hallow'd and so gracious is the time.*"

From this passage, so studiedly introduced, it is evident that the Ghost must be classed among spirits of a malign influence. In fact, the apparition, though introduced as a veritable character, visible to third parties, and participant in the dialogue, may be regarded as an impersonation of the suspicions of his uncle's guilt that lurk in Hamlet's mind, and of the natural desire of revenge that accompanies a sense of wrong. The poet gives these a most impressive form in order to render more vivid his dramatic picture of a will fettered by a spirit of evil.

Just in proportion as Hamlet feels the necessity of action, does his mind busy itself in inventing modes of escaping the pressure. In his interview

with the Ghost, he is eager to learn upon whom vengeance is to be taken, that he "may sweep to his revenge." But the voice of the apparition has not died out of his ears, before this eagerness for action has passed away, and in lieu thereof he resolves to counterfeit madness; a course which, whatever complex motive in his own mind induced him to think expedient, is but a trick, an artifice, a false pretense, which contemplates the postponement of his purpose to some indefinite and future period; for even if he has no other or deeper motive than to excuse the murder of the King on the ground of insanity, he must first take time to gain the reputation of being insane. It has been made a question whether Hamlet's madness is real or feigned; but how can it be doubted that it is only feigned? It would destroy the whole significancy of the character and of the play to suppose his madness real; for our interest in Hamlet lies exclusively in our considering him a *rational and responsible being in his relations to duty.* But insanity is an exemption from all accountability, — the conduct of a lunatic possessing no greater interest morally than do the babblings of an idiot intellectually. Hamlet is a man mentally unsound and morally infirm, — and where lives the man who in some degree is not so? — and it is precisely in this point that he stands for the race, his mental and moral infirmity being of that nature which furnishes the possibility, the *a priori* condition of all error, and thus is representative of the sinfulness of the soul.

All Hamlet's craft is self-defeating. In feigning madness, a scheme that falls in with the habits of his mind, and which he the more readily adopts, as it requires only intellectual effort, and as success can be obtained only through great subtilty of mind, — and, therefore, a mode of duping his enemies the more gratifying to his pride, — he does not seem to perceive that the greater his success, the more he defeats his own end, and renders difficult the accomplishment of his purpose, since he subjects himself to supervision of which he cannot complain, it being the legitimate consequence of his conduct. And, in fact, all his subsequent troubles, and even the tragic catastrophe of the piece, are traceable, by a direct train of cause and effect, to this piece of craft on his part. It brings Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to the Danish court to act as spies upon his conduct; it occasions the test that is made of his madness through the instrumentality of Ophelia, which wrecks her happiness; it causes the death of Polonius, which in turn brings back from France Laertes, who, at the instigation of the King, engages in a plot that ends in the death, not only of Hamlet but of the King, Queen, and Laertes himself.

It should be observed that this course is not adopted by Hamlet for the purpose of alarming the King and awakening his suspicions, and thereby testing his guilt, though it has this effect — for at this time Hamlet fully believes that the

Ghost is "an honest ghost," whose story, moreover, is corroborated by Hamlet's own "prophetic soul." This stratagem of feigned madness, however, will not suffice to excuse permanent inaction; he must resort to some other device. His feelings drive him onward, and vent themselves in language that implies an implicit belief in his uncle's guilt and in the veracity of the Ghost.

> "It cannot be
> But I am pigeon-liver'd and *lack gall*
> To make *oppression bitter*, or ere this
> I should have fatted all the region kites
> With this slave's offal. *Bawdy*, *bloody* villain!
> *Remorseless*, *treacherous*, *lecherous*, *kindless villain!*
> O VENGEANCE."

And yet, after this outburst of rancor and cry for vengeance, does he sweep to his revenge? Directly the reverse. Stopping only to comment on the folly of such an empty ebullition of passion, he turns over once more the whole matter to his intellect. "About, my brain" — and on the supposition that the apparition he had seen was "the devil," who was abusing him to "damn him," by instigating the murder of an innocent man, he devises that "*knavish piece of work*," the self-defeating project of the play — self-defeating, for the means he takes to prove the King's guilt, clearly reveal his own knowledge of the crime, which he has no sooner done than he is doomed, in the mind of the wily monarch, to a speedy death. From this time forward, Hamlet must

exercise as much ingenuity in saving his own life as in compassing that of the King.

Each one of Shakespeare's plays rests upon a moral idea, which is assumed as the law to which life is subject under those special relations or that particular phase which is represented in the play; and the method of constructing the leading characters is either to render them embodiments of the law, — as in the case of most of the heroines, as Imogen, Cordelia, Portia, Viola, and others — or impersonations of some form of error resulting from an infraction of the law, as in the case of all Shakespeare's great tragic heroes. Now, in Hamlet, the law is obedience to the conscience, or practical reason, that is, to the rule of right and fitness, which enjoins self-restraint and the balance of all the faculties, together with their exercise within just limits; in other words, the strict performance of duty to others and to ourselves. This law is infringed by the pride and presumption of the intellect, which attempts to cheat and hoodwink the conscience, and annul that rule of eternal equity which declares that for every grain of error there must be paid down a grain of retribution. Taking, then, as a guide, this method, the principle of which is deduced from an analysis of the organization of the piece we may (upon the supposition that the analysis is correct, and the organic idea accurately hit upon) approximate, in some measure, Shakespeare's own meaning in his portrayal of character, and esti-

mate how far critical opinions diverge from or coincide with the true view.

It may be interesting to pass summarily in review the more celebrated opinions upon the character of Hamlet, and examine them in the light of this method.

According to Goethe, "it is evident that Shakespeare meant to describe *a great duty imposed upon a soul unable to perform it.* . . . A lovely, pure, noble, and highly moral being who, without the strength of mind which forms the hero, sinks beneath a load it cannot bear, and must not renounce. He views *every duty as holy, but this one is too much for him.*"

This opinion evidently goes upon the ground that the injunction of the Ghost entails upon Hamlet a veritable and unmistakable duty which he is withheld from performing, not by conscientious scruples, but by want of resolution alone. But surely this is a wholly inadequate conception of the character of Hamlet, who would be but little entitled to our admiration and sympathy, if his inaction proceeded from a want of courage to face the consequences of performing a *recognized duty*, instead of being the result of a struggle in the depths of his soul between the promptings to a horrible crime and the warnings of conscience against it. Hamlet's difficulty lies in his inability to persuade himself that the behest of the Ghost is a duty at all. Even after his return from his voyage, with a full knowledge of

his uncle's treacherous designs upon his life, he is unable to rid himself of doubt, or reconcile the murder of the King to his conscience. And he enumerates the offenses of the King, as if to find in such accumulation of wickedness something to justify his own meditated crime.

> "Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon?
> He that hath killed my king, and stain'd my mother,
> Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
> Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
> And with such cozenage, *is't not perfect conscience*
> *To quit him with this arm*, and *is't not to be damn'd*
> *To let this canker of our nature come*
> *In further evil?*"

Men act from habit; seldom from reflection. But Hamlet's habit is that of excessive reflection, and this is nearly equivalent to his not acting at all. It is not, as Goethe alleges, that Hamlet lacks the strength of mind of a hero, that the act enjoined upon him is "impossible to him," but that his excessive mental activity weakens his powers of action. With regard to the injunction of the Ghost, Hamlet's habits coincide with his conscience, and, though they are the general cause of his errors, or rather are his errors, they lend a higher coloring of virtue to his character than in reality it possesses. To the influence of habit over his mental and moral views, are attributable the inconsistencies of his conduct. Observe with what remarkable psychological truth he is drawn as keenly alive to the guilt of murdering the King, who has loaded him with injuries, while,

for a comparatively trifling offense, he sends his old school-fellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to the headsman's axe without a twinge of conscience. In this we see the power of custom over both conscience and mind. To kill the King requires a bold, prompt, decisive act; but this conflicts with all Hamlet's habits, which, consequently, arouse his whole mental and moral nature in opposition, and overwhelm his mind with doubts as to the propriety of his course. But to circumvent the tools and spies of the King, and, by a piece of craft, to send them to certain death, accords with his habits of mental activity, gratifies his pride of intellect, and seems to him but a natural consequence of the employment they have thrust themselves into. His conscience, therefore, breathes no whisper against it.

"*Horatio.* So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't?
"*Hamlet.* Why, man, they did make love to this employment;
They *are not near my conscience;* their *defeat*
Does by *their own insinuation grow;*
'Tis *dangerous*, when the *baser* nature comes
Between the *pass* and *fell incensed* points
Of *mighty opposites.*"

With this general reflection, he dismisses their fate from his mind.

The murder of the king he can neither perform nor abandon, and in either case, he is chained by habit. As a duty, he is prevented from performing it by his habit of inaction; as a crime, he is prevented from abandoning it by his habit of

skepticism, which has unsettled his principles and left him to the influence of a spirit of revenge.

Schlegel's view, on the other hand, is that Hamlet, skeptical, irresolute, and fond of crooked ways, is "desirous of exhausting all the possible relations and consequences of the act to the very limits of human foresight," and hence his inaction. But admitting the truth of this, that he desired to consider the act in all its possible consequences, and thereby determine its expediency, is it more than a special phase of Hamlet's more general error, of allowing the excessive activity of his mind to invalidate the decisions of his conscience, and of relying upon his intellect for a rule of action, instead of simply appealing to his moral sense? Duty admits neither of question nor of discussion; it calls for immediate action, and leaves the consequences to God. All attempts to arrive at moral decisions by processes of reasoning, necessarily result in endless speculation, of which, in turn, skepticism is the fruit. And, as Schlegel observes, Hamlet has got so far as to say that "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so," — a doctrine that naturally flows from that speculative morality that seeks a criterion of right and wrong in a calculation of the general consequences of an act rather than in the motives of the agent.

Nor is it necessary to attribute to Hamlet cowardice (in the face of the intrepidity he at various times displays) to account for his inertness, nor

to refer exclusively to a natural inclination for artifice and dissimulation, that policy of "crafty madness," which originates in pride of mental superiority, and under cover of which he hopes, with whatever futility, to evade the obligations of conscience, and effect his ends by some stroke of cunning so profound as not to implicate his volition in the act.

Ulrici, agreeing with neither of these two great critics, contends that "Hamlet has the desire and power to accomplish great things, but it must be in obedience to the dictates of his own independent, original, and creative energy;" that "it is repugnant to his nature to adopt any course of conduct, upon external compulsion, from which arises a conflict between the inward bias of his mind and the pressure of outward circumstances;" that "he is unable to enter upon the enjoined task, not because it is too great and weighty for him, but because he cannot transmute it into an inward spontaneous impulse of his own;" that "he is throughout struggling to retain the mastery of the judgment over the will;" and that "by the creative energy and perfection of thought, he strives to rule and shape the general course of things" so as to convert obedience to the behest of the Ghost into an independent undertaking, etc.

That Hamlet desires to ratify what seems to him an outward call of duty by the inward approval of his conscience, is no doubt true. And

it is equally true that he strives to shape or rather turn events to his advantage, not with a view, however, of retaining the mastery of the mind over the will, and preserving liberty of action, for this would imply either an attempt on his part to bring about a state of things which should justify the killing of the King, irrespective of the injunction of the Ghost, which there is no ground to suppose, but directly the contrary; or it would imply a desire of following the dictates of his own conscience, in which case there would be no need of his shaping events at all; but rather with a view of obtaining some opportunity, as has been repeatedly stated, of executing the mandate or of bringing about the end in such a way, and under such circumstances, as shall exempt himself from all moral responsibility for results. He meditates a crime which conscience forbids, his habits oppose, and no subtilty of intellect can justify; still the awful "Remember me" rings in his ears; he must go forward, and he relies upon his cunning so to seize upon occasion for slaying the King that the act shall be attributable to chance. One effort, already alluded to, he makes to do this, when, thrusting his sword through the arras, he unfortunately, for the credit or soundness of his line of policy, kills, not the King, but poor old Polonius. His mistake lies in adopting craft as a guide instead of obeying the conscience, a grievous error, into which he the more readily falls from his habit of allowing the speculative tenden-

cies of his mind to question his moral intuitions. His artifice and indirection are typical of what is found in every day's experience of the world, where men constantly seek, through craft, to obtain ends not warranted by the conscience, yet so that such ends shall appear fortuitous and not results of their own agency.

It is pride of intellect, the primeval sin, that proves Hamlet's destruction. Without plan or principle of action, he yet feels equal to every occasion, and waits for the conjuncture that is to furnish his opportunity; but, in the meantime, is swept passively down the stream of events. Though the Ghost reappears to him, "laps'd in time and passion," to whet "his blunted purpose;" though he has just proved the guilt of the King by the device of the play; though he feels as if he could —

> "drink hot blood,
> And do such bitter business as the day
> Would quake to look on,"

and though he is aware that the King meditates his death by sending him abroad, and that such a step must, in any event, deprive him of every immediate opportunity of performing his task, yet he allows himself to be put aboard of a vessel for England, at a moment's notice, without a murmur or a struggle, nay, with satisfaction, as it defers his purpose and obviates the necessity of action, without any seeming dereliction on his part. No doubt he trusts to the fertility of his

invention to convert this circumstance to his own advantage. "He sees a cherub" that sees the King's purposes, and he looks forward with apparent delight to a trial of craft and deception with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the companions of his voyage: —

> "There's letters seal'd; and my two school-fellows —
> Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd —
> They *bear the mandate;* they must *sweep my way*
> And *marshal me to knavery.* Let it work.
> O 'tis most sweet
> When *in one line two crafts directly meet.*"

Yet such procrastination is not a mere abandonment of any special duty; it is an abnegation of all principle, worse, in fact, in its external consequences than obedience to the mandate of the Ghost, even though the spirit he had seen had been "the devil;" for had he slain the King, the mischief might have gone no further, whereas, by a fitful and uncertain pursuance of his design, he awakens the suspicions of others, gives rise to plots against his own life, brings death on innocent parties, and involves every one, friend and foe, in one common destruction. And thus the moral is shown that the radical defect in Hamlet's character, which leaves him with all his splendid abilities, right intentions, and amiable qualities, to be blown about by every gust of impulse, is a far deeper guilt and far more tragic in its consequences than even would have been the predominance of a sinful spirit of revenge over his will.

Coleridge's view of Hamlet, which is received with higher favor than any other among English and American critics, is that Shakespeare "in Hamlet seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses and our meditation on the workings of our minds, — an equilibrium between the real and imaginary worlds. In Hamlet, this balance is disturbed; his thoughts and the images of his fancy are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and color not naturally their own. Hence, we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity; and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakespeare places in circumstances under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment. Hamlet is brave and careless of death, but he vacillates from sensibility and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve."

This is true, but it is not the whole truth; it does not cover the whole ground, and omits a full consideration of one side of Hamlet's nature. When the great English critic, after setting forth with so much psychological subtilty, the causes of the diseased activity of Hamlet's mind, merely states that "he vacillates from sensibility," he

throws far into the background what should, for the full understanding of the character, occupy a prominent place in the front of the picture. He adds also, in allusion to Hamlet's own consciousness of an over-activity of mind, "that he mistakes *seeing* his chains for *breaking* them." But it may be doubted whether Hamlet very clearly sees his chains. He himself tells us that "thinking too precisely on the event" is the cause of his inaction; and, no doubt, it is a proximate cause; but whence this superfluous activity but from that fundamental defect, a depravation of the will, which places no check on either thought or feeling, and which is as strikingly manifest in the transient vehemence, the quick-spent flash and outbreak of Hamlet's fiery passions, as in the morbid discursiveness of his understanding? Thought can lead to nothing practical, except so far as it stir within the soul some impulse that can operate as a motive to the will. And, therefore, it is in the soul, the seat of sensibility, of the moral sentiments, the desires, affections, sympathies, passions, the inlet of all the higher influences by which we share in the common heart of humanity and partake of the divine nature, that we find the source of all performance of duty and of all that can operate as motive or prompt the will to action. If, then, we regard Hamlet in this his moral aspect, we perceive that his sensibilities are as strong and ill-restrained as his intellect is great and ill-regulated, and that he passes by most ab-

rupt transitions from the calmness of philosophic meditation to the highest state of excitement, which, unrestrained by any concentration of mind or fixed principle, necessarily expends itself in momentary effervescence. Thus, with him, both thought and feeling "lose the name of action." Out of the exuberance of his strength comes his weakness; his force is that of a fever, which "dies in its own too much." He has a secret consciousness that he is —

> "a pipe for Fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she please,"

and this consciousness finds a voice in his earnest exclamation, —

> "Give me a man
> That is not *passion's slave*, and I will wear him
> In my *heart's core*, aye, in *my heart of heart*."

He considers it "monstrous" that the player should but "in a dream of passion" exhibit so much emotion, while he, exhausted with purposeless thought and declamatory soliloquy, can say nothing. He arrays before himself the motives that should lead him to act, broods upon his wrongs until he works himself into a state of high excitement, which then explodes itself in empty declamation, or, in his own phrase, in "unpacking his heart with words," only to leave him as inert and "unpregnant of his cause" as before.

The connection between the passion and the purpose is set forth in the following passage of

the play before the King, in which Hamlet tells the player that he should insert some "dozen or sixteen lines;" and it may not, perhaps, be too far strained or fanciful to regard the following as drawn by Hamlet from his own experience: —

> "I do believe you think what now you speak ;
> But *what we do determine, oft we break.*
> *Purpose* is but the *slave of memory,*
> Of *violent birth,* but *poor validity ;*
> . . . . . .
> What *to ourselves in passion we propose,*
> The *passion ending, doth the purpose lose ;*
> The *violence of either grief or joy*
> Their *own enactures with themselves destroy,*" etc.

Inasmuch as the opinions of the eminent critics above quoted, though each containing some portion of the truth, are wholly discordant, it will be considered less presumptuous if a view is here offered not coinciding entirely with any of them, more particularly if such view is believed to be supported, nay, suggested by the organic idea of the piece.

Hamlet, then, is a being of the noblest nature, who unites the highest mental power with the greatest conscientiousness, but is deficient in the essential quality of self-control. His will holds in no check either his mind or passions, so that these faculties habitually transgress their proper limits and, by excessive action, destroy their own practical efficiency. So addicted is he to habits of introspection and speculative thought, that his discursive understanding has acquired an ascen-

dancy over the practical and moral side of his nature. His immense activity of mind, questioning all things, puzzles his will, perplexes his conscience, and leaves him in the greatest emergencies of his life without a decisive or practical rule of conduct. He is, consequently, averse to action, and becomes, in a great measure, the creature of impulse, — never exhibiting decision, except when acting with so much precipitation that his intellect has no time to suggest a doubt as to the propriety of his course.

Over his passions he manifests the same want of self-restraint. Endowed with the strongest and acutest sensibility, yet holding his impulses in no check, he kindles readily with passion, and is habitually liable to a high degree of cerebral excitement, which, overcharging his feelings, and rendering him, for the time, incapable of sound judgment or settled purpose, expresses itself, for a brief space, with great vehemence, only to result in exhaustion of moral energy. *He is thus self-defeated by excess of ungoverned faculty.* Whether this disproportion between thought and passion on the one side, and the will on the other, be native, or the result of indulgence in vicious mental habits, or the effect of both combined, is immaterial. This predominance, however, of the intellectual over the practical, is prolific of fatal error; it weakens the sense of duty, annuls the dictates of conscience, abandons the will to impulse, undermines the character, and, like a deep inward

ulcer, "feeds even on the pith of life." And so enchained and demoralized by habit does Hamlet become, so insensible to his true duty, that he is unable to extricate himself from the dilemma in which he is placed, between the behest of the Ghost, enjoining the commission of a crime, and the commands of his conscience, forbidding it. He, therefore, yields to the bias of his disposition, and relies for the execution of his purpose upon the craft and contrivance of his mind rather than upon principle and self-determination. He will plot so cunningly that his ends shall be accomplished by chance; which, in other words, is to say that he will cause all responsibility to attach to the providence of God. This attempt has no other effect than to excite counterplots against himself, which end in his destruction, his purpose remaining unaccomplished; for, though he slays the King, it is not in pursuance of any premeditated plan of his own, but in obedience to the impulse of the moment growing out of a sudden and unexpected accident. His long-pondered purpose has served only to show the impotency of his will, and to lead him up to the point where, in God's own time, he, who dreamed of being the master of the issues of Fate, was to become, not the filial avenger of a father's murder, but the blind and unreflecting instrument of Heaven's retributive justice.

The only resource the poet had to render his hero a type of fallen humanity, — a normal sin-

ner, yet neither criminal nor addicted to sensual vices (for otherwise he would not have retained our respect nor our sympathy), and at the same time endowed with the greatest powers of thought and feeling, — was to draw such powers in excess that their very force might prove their overthrow.

The foregoing analysis, without dwelling upon the beauty or sublimity of the character as a poetical creation, has still kept in view its dramatic development. Perhaps by looking at the ground-plan, still more in the abstract, the poet's design will be more clear.

There are two sources of voluntary action, generally antagonistic, though not necessarily so, — passion and principle. Whenever a conflict arises between them, the intellect always sides with the stronger. If passion outweigh principle, the intellect stands ready with its sophisms to maintain that passion should have sway ; if, on the other hand, principle turn the scale, the intellect is as ready with its justifying arguments in favor of principle. In ordinary cases the conflict is short, the one or the other soon acquiring the ascendancy. But suppose a man circumstanced as Hamlet was, and, by the intervention of the supernatural, the passion of revenge in him converted into a *quasi* duty, so that neither conscience nor a vindictive spirit can prevail. In such case, the intellect, which is an impartial servant of both, must recognize two masters, whose

commands are contradictory; how can these be reconciled? Only by a compromise, which can be no other than that the intellect shall furnish plans to promote the execution of the purpose, which plans, nevertheless, shall result in evasions of all action. This is precisely what takes place in Hamlet. Upon the first revelation of the Ghost, passion has the advantage, and Hamlet, full of ardor, will sweep to his revenge. But even before the last words of the Ghost have been uttered, the moral sense makes itself felt, the intellect has already begun to temporize and suggest the feigning of madness as a cover to the execution of his purpose, but which is, in fact, a postponement of immediate action. But this expedient can only serve for a time; it soon becomes necessary to decide the question again. The intellect hints that the spirit he had seen may be a "damned ghost," and devises the play to test both the Ghost's veracity and the King's guilt. Should the story prove true, *then*, says Hamlet, "I know my course." This, like the previous artifice of madness, looks to the execution of the purpose at the earliest opportunity, yet has the effect of deferring action. The King's guilt is proved, the Ghost's story is verified, and the opportunity is offered. Hamlet finds the King at his prayers.

> "Now I might do it pat, now he's praying,
> And *now I'll do 't.*"

Here is a critical point; one blow and the deed

is done. But the intellect, still true to both masters, whispers, —

> "And *so he goes to heaven:*
> And *so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd,*" —

and at once proceeds to argue the point: —

> "A villain kills my father, and for that
> I, his sole son, do this same villain send
> To heaven.
> Why, this is *hire and salary, not revenge.*"

And pushing still further the logic of the case,

> "He took my father grossly, full of bread,
> With all his crimes broad-blown, as flush as May;
> . . . and am I reveng'd
> To take him in the purging of his soul
> When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
> *No*" —

Ergo, for a complete reparation, he must be taken

> "When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage,
> At gaming, swearing, or about some act
> That has no relish of salvation in't;
> Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven,
> And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
> As hell whereto he goes."

"Fiendish!" exclaim the commentators. "Too horrible to be read or to be uttered!" ejaculates the moralist. No doubt, if these are the real sentiments of Hamlet's heart; but they are mere figments of his brain, and spoken, moreover, in the interests of conscience. They postpone action indefinitely. Immediately after, Hamlet is sent off to England, but soon returns, when he takes

the life of the King under a momentary feeling of exasperation, from which he was neither dissuaded by conscience, nor urged on to by revenge. The poisoned foil, the means of the King's death, is in his hands by accident, and the poisoned cup, which he forces the King to drink, is tempered by the monarch himself. Thus the devices of his enemies, not his own, bring about the end so long sought.

This masterpiece of Shakespeare's dramatic and philosophical genius may be viewed under three aspects, and so profound is the conception and so consummate the skill of the execution that they blend in perfect harmony together. First, Hamlet may be considered in relation to the circumstances of his life, — Hamlet, the individual, the hero of the story, the melancholy prince, who was doomed by his father's spirit to avenge his murder, but who unaccountably refrained from action; who loved Ophelia, and through ungoverned temper and rash conduct broke her heart; whose life is overwhelmed with calamity and sorrows; whose fortunes have the deepest interest for our feelings, and whose moral and philosophical reflections have the greatest fascination for our minds; or he may be viewed psychologically, that is, in relation to the constitution of his mind, and he then becomes a type of a class of characters, in whom the intellect predominates over the will, and whose proneness to speculate and philosophize begets in them an aversion to active

effort and the practical duties of life; who deride ambition, yet feel an inexpressible sadness at powers wasted and time lost, and who acknowledge in their secret hearts, that, after all, the trump of fame but echoes the voice of duty; or lastly, he may be regarded in his moral aspect, and he then stands as the representative of man in his relations to God, the erring finite will and reason in relation to the Infinite; man, the transgressor, endowed with the noblest faculties, which, properly regulated, are capable of achieving all earthly greatness and happiness, but weak, broken, miserable, and defeated through pride in his own strength; man, the slave of habit and passion, ever striving to effect purposes not warranted by the conscience, but all whose short-sighted and guilty schemes inevitably bring destruction upon his own head, because in conflict with Heaven's mighty and providential order of things.

It cannot be necessary to cite instances to prove Hamlet's excesses of thought and feeling. Of his tendency to abstraction, no better illustration can be afforded than that his mind, when stunned by the revelation of the Ghost, escapes from the pressure upon it by falling into its habitual mode of thought, and generalizing upon the very facts that overwhelm him; and of his liability to be transported by sudden passion into great intemperance of conduct and language, his violent deportment at Ophelia's grave is a conspicuous example. One instance, however, of this latter

characteristic — in the famous eaves-dropping scene — has given rise to so much conjecture and controversy that, perhaps, it may be fairly claimed that no key to Hamlet's character can be considered the true one unless it will explain his conduct on this occasion. The question has been, how can we excuse or even account for his excessive harshness to Ophelia, or reconcile it with any sentiment of love he may ever have entertained for her? One easy solution is that, perceiving an embarrassment in Ophelia's manner, he suspected himself to be watched, and, consequently, affects the madman. But, in the first place, it does not appear that Ophelia is at all disconcerted at any time during the interview; and, in the next place, it certainly was not necessary, merely for the purpose of simulating madness, that Hamlet should launch his bitterest sarcasms at the woman he loved, as if her conduct was in the highest degree reprehensible.

Another surmise has been that he did not merely play the madman, but was actually mad, and, therefore, irresponsible for his language and behavior; but Hamlet may not be excused in this wise; for there seems to be no good ground for supposing him lunatic; and, in this interview in particular, he shows a prodigious power of compression, both of meaning and language.

Others, again, suggest that, unwilling to involve Ophelia in the gloomy destiny he feared awaited him, he purposely assumed a manner of discour-

tesy to alienate her regard, and prepare her for a final breaking off of an attachment that could never attain a happy issue; but it must be remembered that the interview is wholly unpremeditated on Hamlet's part, and that Ophelia, by rejecting his addresses and "locking herself from his resort," had spared him the trouble of putting an end to his suit, even had he had the disposition to do so. Besides, his advice to her to betake herself to a nunnery would, if he merely wished to impress upon her that he no longer loved her and never could marry her, argue a jealousy of some other possibly successful suitor, which Hamlet's generous nature was immeasurably above.

None of these suppositions are satisfactory; they do not cover the whole ground, nor furnish an adequate cause for his exasperated feelings.

To understand Hamlet's exact position and to gain his point of view, it will be necessary to consider the previous relations between him and Ophelia. He had been her devoted suitor; had "importuned her with his love," and "given countenance to his speech with almost all the holy vows of heaven." He had, in fact, won her heart wholly; and although her love was a secret scarce confessed even to herself, it would lie open to discernment such as his. She was too guileless to conceal what her heart was so full of and which reveals itself in every word she utters. A knowledge of his suit to her, however, coming "in the way of *caution*," to her father, a suspicious old

politician, versed in the intrigues and corruption of the court, and whose experience would lead him to scout the supposition that a man of Hamlet's rank could have any honorable motive in paying court to his daughter, he peremptorily forbade Ophelia from again receiving Hamlet's attentions, either in person or by letter. This injunction Ophelia, who is a model of filial duty, implicitly obeys. This happens just at the time that Hamlet has the interview with the Ghost. In the anguish of his mind at the horrible revelation that had been made to him, suffering on every account, for his father's death, his mother's shame, and the dread responsibility that rested upon himself, distrusting the whole world, isolated by his misery and needing sympathy, he turns for some alleviation of his burthen to the society of the only one being in whose truth and affection he retains any trust; but lo! she too shuts him out, denies him access to her, repels his letters and affects the utmost coldness and distrust. It needed but this to fill the measure of his bitterness to the brim. Yet he can readily see that Ophelia of her own accord could never have treated him in this way; she had "of her audience been most free and bounteous," and it is plain that so sudden and so great a change in her conduct must be dictated by her father, whose only possible motive can be a suspicion of his good faith; that Polonius, in fact, looked upon him as a villain who would abuse the love that confided in his honor.

In one of his sensitive nature, this insult would sink deep. But debarred from Ophelia's society, and finding his motives suspected, he seeks her no longer. Meantime his affected madness awakens the suspicions of the King, and excites many inquiries as to its cause. With a crafty intent, therefore, of throwing the King and courtiers on a false scent, and urged, moreover, by wounded love and a desire to see for himself how far Ophelia is a willing party to the course enjoined by her father, he throws off all formality, and under the guise of madness, makes his way, unannounced, into her presence.

> "Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
> And with a look so piteous in purport
> As if he had been loosed out of hell
> To speak of horrors, he comes before her."

Grasping her by the wrist, he studies her face in silence. Of course he can detect nothing in her looks but alarm, perhaps, and concern for him; certainly nothing but what would prove her, as the fact was, entirely innocent of any wish in the least to offend him. Whatever reproaches of her unkindness his heart may have felt disposed to utter, he must clearly have seen that her treatment of him was dictated solely by Polonius. This he never forgives, and it is the cause of his pursuing the old courtier with so many hidden sneers and contemptuous personalities. But his assumed lunacy and the uncertainty that hangs over his future life, prevent his coming to any explanation;

and it is no doubt to a secret consciousness that he was fated never to enjoy Ophelia's love, together with a sense of the happiness lost to him, that may be attributed that "sigh so piteous and profound" which Ophelia describes with so much pathos.

Polonius, to whom Ophelia gives an account of Hamlet's strange conduct, jumps to the conclusion, as Hamlet meant he should, that he has gone mad on account of Ophelia's rejection of his suit.

"This is the very *ecstasy* of love
Whose *violent property fordoes itself*,
And leads the *will* to *desperate undertakings*
As oft as any *passion* under heaven
That does *afflict* our natures: I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?
Ophelia. No, my good lord, but as *you did command*,
I did *repel his letters* and *denied*
His access to me.
Polonius. That hath made him mad."

With a great rhetorical flourish Polonius communicates these circumstances to the King, who gladly seizes upon any explanation of Hamlet's eccentric conduct that points away from his own guilt; and it is at once contrived between them, together with the Queen, who is concerned for her son, and who takes, moreover, a woman's interest in a love affair, that Ophelia shall bring Hamlet's madness to the test by giving him an opportunity of renewing his addresses. In this we have an illustration of the organic idea of the

play, for Hamlet, by his natural endowments, his penetration, his profound and comprehensive mind, and by his experience of the supernatural, is lifted, as it were, into a higher sphere of thought and purpose than those around him; and in comparison with the blear-eyed old courtier, may be considered a being of a superior order; and the moral lies in the futile attempt of the old politician to hoodwink and outwit one so immeasurably above him. Ophelia is placed where Hamlet, who has been "*closely* sent for," may encounter her, as "*'twere by accident;*" her father, not without a comment on his own hypocrisy, gives her a book to "read on," —

> "*That show of such an exercise may color*
> *Her loneliness.*"

The Queen expresses a wish to Ophelia, —

> "That her good beauties be the happy cause
> Of Hamlet's *wildness;* so shall she hope her *virtues*
> Will bring him to his *wonted way* again,
> To both their honors," —

the King and Polonius betake themselves to their hiding-place, the Queen retires, and Ophelia is left alone to that interview with Hamlet which is to relieve him of his melancholy and test his madness, by her intimating to him that a renewal of his addresses will be received with favor. He enters, in a mood of mind as far as possible from that which they attribute to him. While they think him love-crazed, his mind is exploring the depths of human thought in search of a solution of

questions, which shake his soul with double strength by reason of his having stood in too close a proximity to the world of shadows. He has relations with the spiritual world which elevate him above the ordinary interests of life, and cause him to cast from his mind all considerations but those that have their end in the ultimate destiny of the human soul. After a deep reflection upon the multitudinous ills of life, and the expediency of escaping them by suicide, he suddenly observes Ophelia, apparently engaged with a book; and, supposing her in a devout meditation, an exercise that accords with the solemn tone of his own mind, he addresses her with kind and grave courtesy.

"Nymph, in *thy orisons*
Be all *my sins remembered*."

She thereupon greets him, —

"My good lord,
How does your honor for *this many a day?*"

and at once, without preliminary remark, offers back to him the love-tokens he had formerly given her; and, assuming a reproachful tone, puts the return of them distinctly on the ground that, as the chief worth of these gifts lay in the words of love with which they were accompanied, his feelings having now changed towards her, they had lost their value, —

"For to the *noble mind*
Rich gifts wax poor, *when givers prove unkind*."

This is, of course, neither more nor less than an avowal of her love for him, and in such form as to invite him to deny her inference and renew his suit, if he has any disposition to do so. It is evidently a shallow device of Polonius, — "the means of meeting," which he has told us he should "contrive" between Hamlet and his daughter, and quite characteristic of one who will —

> "With *windlasses* and *assays* of *bias*,
> By *indirections* find *directions* out."

Still, it might possibly have succeeded, had Hamlet been, as Polonius supposed, really distracted on account of Ophelia's repulse of his suit; but, like all tricksters who think to gain their ends and work out certain moral results by some clever contrivance, but whose schemes are overthrown by the operation of causes far deeper than any their limited knowledge can comprehend, Polonius finds that his device defeats itself, and works an effect directly contrary to the one desired or expected. For Hamlet perceives at a glance that the whole thing is a trick. How can he be upbraided with unkindness? On the contrary, he is the one who has the right to complain. For no other cause than a gratuitous suspicion of his truth and honor, his letters had been repelled, and he himself excluded from her society; in fact, he had met with most inconsiderate, if not insulting, treatment at her hands. Besides, the unmaidenly position Ophelia is placed in, is

proof conclusive to him that the King and her father are at the bottom of the stratagem, and then, no doubt, on the watch and within hearing. His excitable temper takes fire at once at this attempt to dupe him, and his irritation is vastly increased that Ophelia, to whom he had in happier hours poured out his "musick vows," should lend herself to his enemies and make an appeal to his love for her as a means of unmasking his mystery. It excites his deepest distrust; her seeming study and devotion then are all a false pretense; she is not there by accident, but is purposely thrown in his way, prepared to return the gifts he had made to her, and reproach him in a set speech with his insincerity and unkind desertion of her, in order, if possible, to worm out his secret, while others are then lying in wait to overhear him. Of course he is aware that she is but a passive instrument in the hands of the King and her father, yet the irritability of his electric temperament expends itself upon her as the nearest object, and as being *particeps criminis*. Unfortunately, both for him and her, the position she has been made to take furnishes a theme but too prolific of comment. It has, moreover, the disadvantage of reminding him of the insulting distrust with which he had been treated, whilst the bitterness of his feelings is increased by the pang of disappointed love and a sense of happiness within his reach, but to which he may not put out his hand. Add, also, that his mother's

depravity and treachery to his father, so particularly and forcibly dwelt upon in the revelation of the Ghost, have thrown a cloud upon all womanhood, from the shadow of which even Ophelia cannot, in the darker moods of his mind, escape, and to which now her indirect solicitation of his love, together with the disingenousness of the part she is playing, lends a deeper gloom. All these considerations bear together upon his ill-restrained temper, and excite a most acrid flow of feeling. So far from renewing his suit then, as Polonius supposed he would, after the door had been thrown open to him, he gives way to the exasperation he feels at the attempted deception upon him, and, breaking out with the abrupt question, "Ha, ha! are you honest?" goes on to disavow all sentiments of love, all thoughts of marriage, and rails bitterly at the feeling Ophelia reveals, as if it were a piece of the most indelicate wantonness. This course on his part, adopted on the spur of the moment, is eminently characteristic of his impulsive and ungoverned temper; but to what immoderate lengths he allows himself to be carried! Whatever necessity he may have felt himself under, of acting the madman and deceiving the eavesdroppers, he ought never to have allowed his sarcastic bitterness, clothed in generalities though it might be, and disguised under a certain incoherency of manner, to degenerate into most discourteous personalities; nor have scoffed at that love, which was confessed

only out of pity for him, as a piece of indelicacy that furnished good ground for repeated intimations that she would find the best protection for her virtue within the walls of a convent. Perhaps, by attempting to supply the links of association, which connect in Hamlet's mind his flighty speeches into a logical sequence, and exhibit the under-current of feeling (though to reduce Hamlet's flashing thoughts to words is to take the life of the dialogue), the explanation of the scene will be more obvious: —

"*Hamlet.* Ha, ha! are you honest [that you make so bold an avowal]?

Ophelia. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty [considering the readiness you evince to be wooed] should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly, for [if you may believe your very wise father] the power of [your] beauty will transform [my] honesty from what it is to a bawd [that will dishonorably solicit you] sooner than the force of [my] honesty can translate [your] beauty into his likeness [and prevent you from practicing the deceit you do here]. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time [this very moment] gives it proof [You invite me to make love to you]. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it [Your innocence does not prevent your inheriting a portion of the craft of your wily old father. The Ophelia I loved was pure and guileless; you are bold and crafty]. I loved *you* not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. [Why do you go about to get me to woo you?] Get thee to a nunnery. Why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; [at least I shall be thought so when I have killed the king, who is lurking here about]; with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape or time to act them in; what should such fellows [as your amiable father has represented me to be] do, crawling between heaven and earth! [But he was right]. We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. [By the by] *Where's* your father?

Oph. *At home*, my lord.

Ham. [Indeed! Then, perhaps, he will not hear me when I say] Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool [by intermeddling in my affairs] nowhere but in's own house. Farewell."

Had the scene closed here, Hamlet's manner and language, though harsh, might be considered as not transcending the extravagance required to feign madness, but he is now fairly caught and carried away by the rush of his own feelings. The direct falsehood which Ophelia is driven to tell, excites his contempt and adds to his exasperation; and as one unhappy association after another lends its influence to swell the angry tide of passion, his animadversions transgress all limits of reason and decorum. His remarks take the form of a general tirade against matrimony and the frailty of woman; still they have the tone of personal invective. He allows the bitterness with

which his heart overflows to asperse and stain the image and ideal of all that was left to him of truth and virtue in the world; and he pours out his scorn upon the sex as if the pure and artless Ophelia was the type of whatever is frail and frivolous in woman. He bids her repeatedly farewell, but each time returns to add some speech more bitter and offensive than the one before. He does not stop to assign to its proper cause her disingenuousness and want of reserve; but rails at what he deems her indecent haste to be married, by advising her, if she must "needs marry," to marry a fool who cannot detect her wantonness; but rather than that, to betake herself to a nunnery, "and quickly too." She listens to all he says with deepest pity, as evidence of a noble mind overthrown, but it wrecks her happiness for all that; and when the blow is repeated by her father's death at Hamlet's hands, it unsettles and crazes her reason. Thus the schemes of Polonius to unmask Hamlet's madness end in driving crazy his own daughter. And Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia, too, recoils upon himself and is one of the causes that coöperate to destroy him. The art of the poet is shown in keeping alive our sympathy with Hamlet, even while exposing the faults of his character. We look at him with Ophelia's eyes, and pardon his intemperate passion even for his utter wretchedness. And the same pity with which we regard all fallen greatness and excess of glory obscured is awakened

by Hamlet, whose nature, so great, so noble, so beautiful, is yet so intrinsically weak that its own defects must prove its sure destruction.

Nor would the tragic representation of life be complete if the hero, on whose head are showered all the sorrows that humanity is heir to, had not, through unbridled passion, aimed his most fatal blow at the object he loved best. If Hamlet's madness, as Dr. Johnson insists, be the cause of much mirth, it can only be with those who fail to discern from what depths of woe the bitter stream of his wit and levity wells forth.

Around Hamlet, as the centre of the piece, are grouped numerous and varied characters, all holding some direct relation to him and combining to give a perfect unity to the play, as a work of art, by each being made a representative of some special phase of the organic idea. Thus, in Polonius, we see the same mental and moral springs of action, namely, craft and conscience, which are so conspicuous in Hamlet; yet with what creative power are these characteristics diversified in their manifestations and results! The pride of intellect, which prompts Hamlet to rely upon his reach and subtlety to accomplish his designs, is parodied in the superannuated politician, and becomes an empty conceit in his own cunning. But this trait is rendered amazingly natural and life-like by being drawn both as a native bent of the mind and as a long-confirmed habit. Polonius has grown old in the practice of state-

craft, and in his age, his mind still runs, even in the management of private matters, in the grooves worn by habits of intrigue and indirection. He is, moreover, a lord chamberlain, a master of ceremonies, and is exceedingly vain of his knowledge of the mode; but, as in his decay of mind, his judgment and tact have become impaired, his attention to observances is frequently misplaced, and he is dreadfully prolix on occasions when brevity of statement is most demanded. Thus the habits of his mind, as he verges towards dotage, display themselves in imbecile cunning and pedantic formalism. The picture is one of habit surviving faculty. To us, for whose inspection his mind is turned inside out, he appears ridiculous, though to Reynaldo, to whom he gives a lesson in policy, he may have seemed wise, and to the King and Queen, whom he favors with a specimen of his logic and oratory, he may have seemed learned. We look into his mind as we might do into a worn-out juggler's box, no longer fit to perform tricks with, but in which can be seen the false slides and springs with which former deceptions were practiced.

The loss of mental power — particularly of memory — incidental to old age, which retains a recollection of what is long since past, while it loses its grasp upon what is immediately in hand, is exemplified in Polonius. Once prudent and sagacious, he is rich in maxims generalized from his former experience, but he lacks the mental

vigor required to follow out a methodical train of thought on a new topic. He retains his wise saws and scholastic forms, but is impaired in wit, insight, power of attention, and taste. Like Hamlet, Polonius has received a university education. This, in the young prince, is displayed in a thorough comprehension of the principles of rhetorical art, and in his discourse enriched with classic and scholar-like allusions; whereas in the old courtier we see only the pedantic and formal side of intellectual culture.

Polonius is condemned both as a fool and a knave, but this judgment seems harsh and unjust. The ends he aims at are honest and conscientious ones, and, if he prefers the crooked way of arriving at them, it is only that he may exult in his own skill and policy. It is not knavery, but vanity, that leads him to adopt knavish methods. He had been wiser, no doubt, had he been more direct. He is a careful father, and in his intercourse with his children, at which times he is both sincere and unaffected, he shows himself a wise man and an affectionate parent. Though unable to comprehend a man of Hamlet's exalted nature, he cannot be censured for that, nor for distrusting, under the circumstances, Hamlet's motives in paying his addresses to his daughter. Besides, he shows the fairness of his mind by recanting his error as soon as he is informed of it — and observe that the passage turns upon the notions of *excess* and *defect*.

"I am sorry, that with *better heed and judgment*
I had not *quoted* him: I fear'd he did but trifle —
And meant to wreck thee; but *beshrew my jealousy!*
It seems, it is *as proper to our age*
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion."

These words are as honest as shrewd.

Polonius is condemned, also, as untrue to his allegiance; but he owed no allegiance to Hamlet personally, and after the death of Hamlet's father, as the crown was an elective one, he coöperated — as no doubt he had a perfect right to do — with the other nobles, in whose suffrages lay the succession, to raise Claudius to the throne. To a man of Hamlet's quick apprehension and impatient temper, the prolixity and formalism of Polonius are intolerable; besides, the young prince owes him a grudge for the insult implied in Ophelia's repulse of his addresses; he therefore makes him the butt of his most stinging ridicule; but nowhere does he imply that Polonius had been false in his political course. It may be presumed that Shakespeare did not intend that we should look at Polonius with Hamlet's eyes, for, notwithstanding his servility and decay of mind, his habits of policy and cunning, and his courtier-like complaisance, he is loyal and dutiful – "a man, faithful and honorable." The regard the populace have for him is certainly a sign in his favor, and the unusually strong attachment to him of his children, particularly of Ophe-

lia, which breaks out with so deep a pathos in her crazy songs, is a proof of the goodness of his heart. His precepts to Laertes are the pith of prudential morality; and the poet has seen fit to announce through his lips the moral of the play in its most distinct and condensed form.

> "*To thine own self be true,*
> And *it must follow*, as the night the day,
> *Thou can'st not then be false to any man.*"

Polonius illustrates the superiority of the moral side of our nature over the intellectual by its survival in full force after the mind has decayed. His habits of cunning survive, it is true, but are formal; his habit of duty also survives and is real. In this respect, he contrasts favorably with Hamlet, for, as Hamlet's great intellect does not aid him at all in the performance of duty, so neither do the mental infirmities of Polonius prevent his full attention to all that duty requires; and, again, as Hamlet, in his tendency to abstraction, illustrates the force of habit over the mind to the utter neglect of duty, so does Polonius exhibit the force of habit in the use of finesse to effect ends perfectly justifiable.

Polonius meets his death through his officious and undignified intermeddling, to which he is stimulated by his excessive conceit of his own penetration. In his fondness for intrigue, he relies more upon the efficacy of human wit than of moral causes, and believes that the most cunning man must necessarily win. The result is that he

is run through the body, and finds, in Hamlet's phrase, "to be too busy is some danger."

This tragedy, throughout, exemplifies the effects produced by that loss of balance in the mind which prevents the harmonious coöperation of the intellectual and moral man. Thus Polonius attempts to accomplish honest ends by trickery which overreaches itself; while the King furnishes an example of intellect wholly disjoined from the conscience and in the service of guilt. In his mental and moral aims, the King is the direct opposite of Hamlet; the latter striving to contrive a murder without moral culpability, the former seeking to repent his guilt without making amends for his crime. Hamlet, meditating a murder, is held back by conscience; the King, goaded by conscience to repent, is held back by his guilt; but they both equally rely upon their depth and reach to effect their ends, and give conscience the go-by.

The character of Claudius is one of those powerful delineations of human depravity, which, like Iago, Angelo, and others, lay bare to our gaze the abyss of corruption into which the human soul may sink. Externally viewed, Claudius is a sagacious and politic monarch, whose strong and practical understanding dispatches affairs with energy and ease, and whose public bearing is wanting in no royal dignity; but viewed internally, he is a man of bestial vices and devilish wickedness. "An adulterate beast," of luxurious

and intemperate habits, a treacherous fratricide and seducer of his brother's wife, with smiles upon his cheek and guile upon his tongue and murder in his heart, he is brought before us, in all his full-blown transgressions, a type of carnal sin. Having reached the throne by a secret murder, he endeavors, by smooth and flattering speech, to ingratiate himself with all who approach him; but under his smiles and "painted words," he hides "a bosom black as death." The tortures of conscience drive him to prayer, but the chains of habit are around him; "his stronger guilt defeats his strong intent," and he is left without a hope and hardly a possibility of repentance. In full possession of the effects of his unnatural crimes, — all knowledge of which is shrouded within the secrecy of his own breast, — he holds high wassail; but even then, within hearing of "the triumph of his pledge," the armed spectre, intent on retribution, is stalking along the castle walls, to arouse the avenger to his work. From this time forth he knows no peace. "His soul is filled with discord and dismay." Instead of heeding the admonitions of conscience, he hopes, by craft, to hedge himself in from the results of his guilt. Astute to perceive, quick to decide, prompt to act, he hatches from his fertile mind plot upon plot, to quell the guilty fears that "rage like a hectic in his blood;" and, no doubt, he would have proved an overmatch for the procrastinating Hamlet, had the struggle been with him alone.

But the forces of nature are against him, and the heaving of a billow in mid-ocean defeats his best-laid scheme. Under pretense of shielding Hamlet from the consequences of killing Polonius, he dispatches him to England, at the same time sending forward orders that, immediately upon his arrival, he be put to death. This apparently renders the King secure; but the ship in which Hamlet is embarked is chased and overtaken by a pirate, which Hamlet, with characteristic rashness, boards so far in advance of his followers that, the vessels being that moment parted, he is left alone, a prisoner, in the hands of the thieves. But they prove "thieves of mercy," and land him again, with new proofs of the King's guilt and added motives for vengeance, on his native shore. To human eyes, the separation of the vessels, on which these results depended, was the merest accident; but the heaving of the billow that caused it, — or "the contention of the winds," as it appears in the earliest form of the play, — was the effect of the combined operation of all the forces which that moment were acting on the globe from pole to pole. It was a predetermined event in the universal scheme of things. Baffled thus, the King, with consummate craft, converts the fiery vengeance of Laertes into an instrument to work his own designs, and projects a plan by which Hamlet's death will be effected as if *by accident:* —

> "I will *work* him
> To an *exploit*, now ripe in my *device*,
> Under the which he shall not *choose* but *fall*,
> And for his *death* no wind of *blame* shall breathe;
> But even his mother shall uncharge the *practice*
> And call it *accident*."

But the poisoned foil which the confederates employ to insure the death of their victim is turned upon themselves, and becomes the means, by an event no human foresight could have anticipated, of making certain their own destruction.

In contrast with the foregoing characters, in which there prevails great mental and moral activity, are those of the Queen and Ophelia, both of which are marked by passiveness of mind and conscience, though this in the Queen is the quiet of a soul thoroughly drugged with vice, while in Ophelia it is the peace of mind which springs from habitual innocence.

The Queen belongs to that class of weak and yielding women, in whom there is so strong a constitutional taint of sin, and so little affinity with the asceticism of virtue, that they readily decline to the rankest and grossest vices. Gertrude cannot plead, in extenuation of her offenses, either the inexperience or the ardor of youth. Her "reason panders will." Nor does she attempt to countervail the admonitions of conscience with craft; for she possesses little or no reflection, and "damned *custom* hath so brazed" her conscience

that it raises but a feeble voice in her soul. And, though it is roused from its torpor by the terrible invective of Hamlet, we clearly see that the penitence she professes is but temporary, that habit will prove too strong for contrition, and that she will at once relapse into her customary associations with her paramour.

Still, corrupt as she is, the darkness of her guilt is touched with light by her love for Hamlet and her pitying fondness for Ophelia, on whose innocence she looks with that tender interest with which one, whose soul is sunk in sin, regards the pure and inexperienced, — a sentiment which relieves her degradation with a gleam of moral beauty, as it is a relic and remembrancer of that virtue from which she has irretrievably fallen.

In Ophelia,[1] the will is entirely subjected to a sense of duty; and her character is, therefore, an embodiment of the prime relation of the will to the conscience, — that is, *Obedience*. So dutiful is she, that she observes without question every parental precept; so free from introspection, that she seems hardly aware of her own love; so guileless, that she is unconscious of being made an instrument for effecting the crafty designs of others. In all her words and acts, she exhibits

[1] Did Shakespeare find the name of Ophelia in old romantic or historic literature, or did he coin it by the transposition of a single letter from the Greek Οφειλη, *i. e.*, *duty*? Its appropriateness to the character would lead to the conjecture that the last is true. It may be "to consider too curiously to consider so," but the coincidence is noteworthy.

the unsuspecting fearlessness of innocence. That Hamlet's tenders of affection and vows of love may be insincere, has never entered her thoughts. To her brother, who warns her of her danger, she promises that his "lesson" shall be "watchman to her heart," but that this lesson is not needed is evinced by her retort upon him of his own admonitions: —

> "But, good my brother,
> Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
> Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
> Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
> And recks not his own rede."

This proves that her virtue is not simply a passive, innocent ignorance, but an active principle, none the less strong because so inwoven with all her thoughts and impulses that duty and obedience are the habit of her soul. Like all of Shakespeare's and Nature's truly virtuous women, Ophelia is neither a simpleton nor a prude. Her nature is sensuous, and she opens her heart to the warmth of Hamlet's love as freely and naturally as the flower opens its petals to the sun. The images of young desire may float, at times, upon the surface of her mind, but no shadow from an evil will ever falls upon the stainless depths of her woman's soul. And yet what comments have been heard upon this character! Well might Hamlet say to her, "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." To her father, who forbids her "to give words or

talk with the lord Hamlet," she yields implícit obedience. The grief, which this sacrifice of feeling to duty would naturally occasion, must have been greatly increased by her fears that, in crushing Hamlet's heart as well as her own, she has caused his loss of reason. On this ground we can account for her yielding to the crooked policy of her father to test her lover's madness, which, otherwise, modesty and maiden pride would have alike prevented; for, after having abruptly broken off all intercourse with Hamlet, to throw herself deliberately in his way for the purpose of inducing him to renew his suit, — though this is enjoined by her father, sanctioned by the King, and stimulated by her own hopes, — is a step she could not have taken, except as a duty to repair a grievous wrong she had unwittingly occasioned. Her conduct is attributable as well to her sense of right as to her habit of filial obedience, but it places her in a position that is easily misconstrued, and subjects her to a terrible blow which she has not the strength to endure. Her lover mad, as she thinks, through her treatment of him, and her father dead through his frantic act, she sinks under her burthen of misery. Her great love becomes a great despair, which shatters her mind into fragments, that, like a broken mirror, reveal in distorted forms the secrets of her heart and the ruin of her hopes. Inimitable for pathos and beauty is the poetic picture of the insanity and death of Ophelia, but, notwithstanding its

appeal to our feelings, it awakens thoughts that inspire more awe than sympathy. It is obvious that her pitiable fate is owing to her trials being disproportioned to her strength, and that it is one of the remote effects of the crime of Claudius. In this point, we read the moral of her fate. Tragedy, which depicts the inevitable recoil of sin through a moral necessity, has no representation more truly and awfully tragic than that of the terrible power of evil so to derange the relations and disturb the harmonies of the moral world that they cannot be readjusted, and the equilibrium restored, without involving truth and innocence in the same ruin that sweeps away the grossest vice and the blackest guilt. And thus the blameless Ophelia is hurried along to her destruction by the same train of events that carry her father, brother, lover, and the guilty King and Queen, with their miserable accomplices, to a common doom.

Laertes transcends Hamlet as much in will and energy as Hamlet does him in intellect. He does not participate in that mental activity, which presents so many considerations to the mind, that it is unable to conclude what course to pursue. No scruples of conscience, no fear of consequences, chills the ardor of his resolves. He stops not to effect his purpose by any subtle device, but rushes, sword in hand, into the presence of the King, and demands vengeance; he throws off his allegiance, and is ready for treason; he consigns

conscience and the fear of Heaven to the "profoundest pit," and is ready for murder; he heeds not the sin involved in the act, for he "dares damnation." All considerations of this world or the next, good name, fame, the welfare of friends or of the State, or of his immortal soul, have no weight with him, for —

> "*Both the worlds he gives to negligence*
> *Let come what comes*, only he'll be revenged
> Most throughly for his father."

He sets his will "against all the world," and for his means, he will supply the want of them by his energy; in all which he is the direct contrast of Hamlet, especially in the last particular, for Hamlet has "strength and means" in abundance, but has not the determination to use them.

Like Hamlet, Laertes is hot-headed, excitable, and deficient in self-control, but he has no share in the mental dissipation or moral weakness that render Hamlet so inefficient. He loves his friends and hates his foes. He is seduced by the King and his own fiery passions into a most infamous act of treachery, yet his better nature revolts against it; and the utter freedom from malice which he shows in his dying moments, when he is caught "in his own springe," proves that his crime arose from an excess of love towards his father and sister, which, under the artful instigations of the King, passed over into an excess of hate towards their supposed destroyer. To com-

plete the contrast between Laertes and Hamlet, it should be observed that, as the latter is all-in-all for essentials, so the former lays the greatest stress upon "ceremony." It is the want of ceremony at his father's interment that excites his rage; it is the refusal of full ceremonies at the burial of his sister that causes him to denounce the priest; and, in accepting Hamlet's apology, though he admits himself satisfied "in nature," he still withholds a full reconciliation until certain ceremonious forms can be complied with.

From the foregoing attempt to point out the ground-plan of the characters, it will, perhaps, appear that, notwithstanding the differences and contrasts that exist among them, they are all intimately related, and blend in one effect, as outgrowths of one and the same fundamental idea. To the same idea, will the varied metaphor, imagery, and diction of the piece be referable. In analyzing the vocabulary, the method adopted is to assume as generic terms the words which express the leading notions involved in the moral scheme or organic law of the piece; and under these radicals, if they may be so called, to classify all vocables met with in the play, which bear a similar or analogous signification. Of course it is not to be expected that these analogies will be restricted by etymological affinities, nor is it necessary that they should be; the end of the poet is to vary his diction while he still confines it within a certain circle of associations; and to

attain this end, he uses all terms related or correlated, whether by etymology, by affinities of signification, by meanings deducible from analogies between the material and moral worlds, or from any analogies whatever. He thus preserves unity of thought under the greatest variety of expression. The classes of words, also, which are formed under the radical terms, may with propriety be enlarged by reference to the Latin or other etymons of such radicals, on the principle that all the different senses of a word are but shades and modifications of its one original meaning; and, consequently, the different vocables required for translation of the different senses of a Latin or other root of an English derivative, must possess some latent affinity of signification, sufficient, at least, for the poet's purposes. Not that the poet went to his lexicon for his language, but that the critic must do so in order to discern the relationship which the more important words that enter into the vocabulary of the play have with each other and with the organic idea, — a relationship which the poet apprehended through his supreme mastery over words, and his keen sense of their affinities, their suggestive force, and consonancy with his subject. For the problem is, whether the poet was governed in his composition by an organic idea; and if it can be shown that the diction of a piece can be classified according to an idea, which, at the same time, is obviously illustrated in the characters and incidents, it will be fairly

inferable that the illustration of such idea forms the true intent and meaning of the play.

It should be observed, also, that Shakespeare always preserves the æsthetic balance of his diction by the use of classes of words of opposite meanings; but this is not arbitrarily done, for, as the characters are representatives of either the observance or violation of the law which forms the organic idea of the play, there will necessarily arise an opposition between the words that enter into the composition of the piece.

"Hamlet" being a representation of life wherein man is viewed with special regard to his accountability for his *actions*, it treats of duty and morality. In others of Shakespeare's plays, the ideas, that form their organic principles, are but certain phases or modifications of the moral law, applicable to some special class of duties; but in "Hamlet," the organic idea is the rule of reason or the moral law itself, which, without reference to any particular class of obligations, enjoins, generally and abstractly, the performance of all duty.

The terms, therefore, which are expressive of those general conceptions most intimately connected with morality may be adopted as radicals in an analysis of the vocabulary of the play. These terms may be found in the statement already made at considerable length of the moral basis of the piece. Among them are Reason, Will, Craft, Action, Observance or Obedience, Custom and Habit, Temperance, Excess, and De-

fect. And as with the philosophy of action which is the main subject of the play, the dramatist weaves in also an accessory or parallel doctrine of Acting as an art, we may add to the list the word Drama.

It is assumed that, if in the play there can be found numerous words of similar meanings which may fairly be classed under these general conceptions respectively, it will be presumptive proof that the poet intended by a constant reiteration of such conceptions under one form or another, to impress them upon the mind and to give unity of effect as well as a particular tone and coloring to his dramatic illustration of the moral idea which he adopts as the ground of his piece and of which these conceptions are constituent parts.

Morals are indicated by habits. "Custom, exercise, habit, education, these are the things," says Bacon, "which reign in morals." This is implied in Latin etymon *mos* or *mores*, the different acceptations of which may be placed under this head, as *manner*, *custom*, *way*, *use*, *fashion*, *wont*; *conduct*, *behavior*; *nature*, *quality*, *property*, *mode*, *rule*, *law*, *precept*.[1] Also *usual*, *customary*, *common*.

Place here also *practice*, *exercise*, *art*, *skill*, *dexterity*, all of which are habits. Also words associated with *education*, which is but "early custom," such as *writing*, *reading* (both of which are habits), *book*, *volume*, *philosophy*, *school*, *scholar*, *university*, etc.

[1] Andrew's *Lat. Lex.* in v.

In this play, Shakespeare has painted the mental and moral traits of his characters, whether good or bad, as inveterate habits, — principles of action confirmed by use. Of this, Hamlet, the King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, are marked instances. Indeed, all the dramatic personages show the influence of custom and education over their conduct and manners; as in the fop Osric who has got "the tune of the time and *outward habit* of *encounter*."

Even in the grave-digger, attention is called to it.

"*Hamlet.* Has this fellow no feeling of his business that he sings at grave-making?

Horatio. *Custom* hath made it in him a *property* of *easiness.*

Ham. 'Tis e'en so; the hand of *little employment* hath the *daintier sense.*"

Custom is from the Latin *consuetudo*, through the French *coutume*. *Consuetudo*, in addition to the meaning of custom, habit, etc., signifies also *customary intercourse*, *familiarity*, *companionship*, *conversation;* wherefore there may be classed under this head any word denoting habitual intercourse, as *companion*, *comrade*, *fellow*, *associate*, *commerce*, *rival* (in the sense of *companion*), and others. The King's description of the Queen's love for Hamlet and his own love for the Queen is a strong picture of habit.

"The Queen, his mother,
Lives almost by his looks, and for myself,

She's so *conjunctive to my life and soul*
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her."

Custom and costume are the same word, and *habit* means both a custom and an attire. The dramatist, therefore, who neglects no analogies, however minute, that will yield him metaphors or illustrations in harmony with his subject, draws numerous figures from apparel, particularly when this is indicative of the inward habit of the mind, for, as Polonius says, "the apparel oft proclaims the man." Thus in the passage where the King speaks of Laertes's "*art* and *exercise*" with his rapier as —

"A very *riband* in the *cap* of youth
Yet needful too; for *youth* no less *becomes*
The *light* and *careless livery* that *it wears*
Than *settled age* his *sables* and his *weeds*,
Imparting *health* and *graveness*."

On the other hand, Hamlet alludes in his opening speech, to his "inky cloak" and "*customary suits* of solemn black" as being merely outward shows that do not denote truly or fully his inward disposition.

Observe the allusions to the influence of custom to deprave or to correct the manners; as in the closet scene between Hamlet and his mother, particularly in the passage "assume a virtue, if you have it not," in which the force of custom to render more easy each successive step or repeated act that forms the habit, good or bad, is likened

to a garment, which, in proportion to its use, is easily put on.

"Assume a *virtue*, if you have it not.
That monster, *custom*, who all *sense* doth eat
Of *habits evil*, is angel yet in this,
That to the *use* of *actions fair* and *good*
He likewise gives a *frock* or *livery*
That *aptly* is put on. *Refrain* to-night
And that shall lend a kind of *easiness*
To the *next abstinence*; the *next more easy*
For *use* can almost change the stamp of nature," etc.

Custom forms frequently the topic of the dialogue; for instance, in the King's speech reproving Hamlet for his "unmanly grief," the argument of which turns upon the absurdity of excessively lamenting what is so "*common*" as "death of fathers." Also Hamlet's comments on the Danish custom of wassailing; also his soliloquy on the weary and stale "*uses* of the world" as exemplified in his mother's hasty marriage; also the scene between Hamlet and Osric in which is ridiculed the affected fashion of speech of the day; also the scene between the King and Laertes, in which the former describes Lamond's skill in horsemanship and Laertes's "*art* and *exercise* in his defense;" and in short, any reference to the results of education and culture, as Polonius's speech on the causes of Hamlet's madness or Hamlet's remarks upon dramatic art, for art and skill are habits, and these passages are therefore consonant with the dominant idea of the play.

The funeral of Ophelia is a marked instance of

custom; it is a rite, a ceremony, or form established by custom. Hamlet calls "ceremony" *a garb, i. e.*, a habit.

"The appurtenance of welcome is *fashion* and *ceremony;* let me *comply with* you in this *garb*, lest my extent to the players (which, I tell you, must *show fairly outward*) should more appear like entertainment than yours."

Allied in signification to *custom* is *observance*, though the latter may be taken in a wider sense. *Observance* is the genus, of which custom is a species. It is a word and thought of the deepest import in this play. It expresses, so far as one word can, the fundamental idea. To be observant (*i. e.*, of the rule of right) is to be *obedient, dutiful, moral.* In opening a chapter on moral knowledge in the "Advancement," Lord Bacon says: "We now proceed to that knowledge which considereth of the appetite and the will of man; whereof Solomon saith, *Custodi cor tuum, nam inde procedunt actiones vitæ*," which being literally translated is, "*Watch* (*i. e., observe, guard, keep*) thy heart, for thereout come the actions of thy life."

Thus Ophelia, who exemplifies the rule of obedience, says, in reply to the warnings of Laertes: —

> "I shall the *effect* of this good lesson *keep*
> As *watchman to my heart.*"

Observance is defined *rite, ceremony, obedience, observation; custom, practice, performance, form, attention, respect;* and *to observe*, is to *watch, note,*

fulfill, obey, follow, celebrate, to comply with, practice.

Observant is, *obedient, carefully attentive, cautious.*

The notion of observance runs through the scenes and incidents, as, to take the more prominent instances, in —

Act I. Sc. 1. A *watch* upon the platform; *sentinels* on *guard.* Horatio brought there to watch for the apparition.

Sc. 3. Laertes's *cautions* to Ophelia, and her rejoinder already quoted.

Sc. 4. *Watch* on the platform.

Act II., Sc. 1. Polonius instructs Reynaldo to watch his son; "*Observe* him in thyself."

Sc. 2. King sets Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as *spies* upon Hamlet. Hamlet detects their motives, "Nay, then I'll *have an eye upon you.*" Scene concludes with Hamlet's plan of proving guilt of King, "I'll *observe* his look," etc.

Act III., Sc. 1. Scene between Hamlet and Ophelia; the King and Polonius, "lawful *espials,*" eavesdropping.

This is followed by Ophelia's soliloquy, in which the acme of her praise of Hamlet is, that he is "*the observed of all observers.*"

Sc. 2. Instruction to players, the pith of which is "the special *observance* that they o'erstep not the *modesty* of nature."

Then the interview between Horatio and Hamlet, who requests the former to watch the King —

"Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe mine uncle."

This is succeeded by the play, during which Hamlet watches the King.

Sc. 3. King praying, Hamlet observing him.

Sc. 4. Closet scene, in which Polonius plays the spy.

Act V., Sc. 1. Churchyard. Hamlet and Horatio, in concealment, observing the funeral *rites* of Ophelia.

"Couch we a while, and *mark*."

There are minor instances of the introduction of the same thought, but the above will show that the notion of observance, which may be said to represent the organic idea, pervades the structure of the piece, and gives shape to its incidents.

With *observe* may be classed *reck*, *quote* (*i. e.*, observe), *view*, *mark*, *heed*, *give note*, *espy*, *gleam*, *collect* (*i. e.*, by observation), *protect*, *keep safe*, respect, regard, and others.

Observance (*i. e.*, of the rule of reason) results in temperance, duty, fitness, right, etc.

Temperance is equivalent to the sovereignty of the reason, and all words signifying *government* may properly be classed under this head. It is not necessary to enumerate them.

With *temperance*, in the sense of *moderation*, *self-restraint*, etc., may be classed *modesty*, *abstinence; refrain*, *forbear*, *contain*, *retain*, *forbid;* also *chaste*, *continent*, *hedge*, *keep shut*, *keep close*,

or any word having the sense of *restraint*, together with words significant of reticence, as *secret*, *silence*, *occulted*, *hidden*, etc., with which last there may be here placed their opposites, as *unfold*, *unmask*, *proclaim*, *divulge*, *unkennel*, *relate*, *hatch*, *disclose*, *open*, *reveal*, and the like.

Opposed to *temperance* are words signifying *intemperance*, as *incontinent*, *rash*, *sudden*, *impetuous*, *desperate*, *unlimited*, *prodigal*, *hasty*, *hot*, and *heat*, *flame*, *fire*, used metaphorically of moral qualities or emotions of the mind.

Opposed both to temperance and observance or obedience, are words affined with *trespass*, such as *sin*, *guilt*, *fault*, *offense*, *amiss*, *sullies;* also *err*, *erring*, *error*, *wandering*, and all words importing *excess* or transgression, as *superfluous*, *extravagant*, *cast beyond*, *gambol from*, *plurisy;* also to *top*, to *pass*, *o'ertop*, *cry in the top*, *o'ergrowth*, *overhappy*, *overdone*, *overhasty*, *overwhelm*, *overpeer*, *overrule*, *o'ercrow*, *o'erhear*, *o'erreach*, *o'erraught*, *o'erhanging*, *overcome*, *o'erlook*, *o'erleaven*, *o'ermaster*, *overstep*, *o'erweigh*, *o'ersway*, *o'erthrow*, *outface*, *outlive*, *out-herod;* also *mutine*, *rebel*, *breach*, *break*, *violence*, *assail*, *assault*, *outrageous*, *shatter*, and others which are opposites to words classed under *observance*.

As there are sins of omission or short-coming, as well as of commission or trespass, there may be placed here words significant of *defect*, such as *defeat*, *loss*, *loose*, *undo*, *fall off*, *come short*, *decline*, *declension*, *deject*, *vailed*, *forgone*,

lapsed, *fade*, *vanish*, *shrunk*, *blanch;* also *imperfection*, *weakness*, *frailty*, *want*, *deprive*, *lack*, *cease*, *fail*, *die*, *death*, *weary*, *stale*, *flat*, *dull*, *tardy*, *slow*, *delay*, *pause*, *abatement*, *leisure*, *neglect*, *negligence*, *forfeit*, *fordo*, and many others, including words compounded with the Saxon prefix *un*, signifying privation, such as *unprevailing*, *unsinewed*, *uneffectual*, etc.

As the play portrays the will diseased through the influence of the corrupt nature or carnal mind of man, and brings into strong contrast the immortality of the soul with the corruptibility of the body, it is filled with words significant of *disease*, *corruption*, and *carnality;* as *distemper*, *plague*, *infected*, *contagious*, *mildewed*, *taint*, *pestilent*, *ulcerous*, *leprous*, *canker*, *hectic*, *tetter*, *imposthume*, *lazar-like*, *envenom*, *unwholesome*, *mortal*, *carnal*, *loathsome*, *corrupt*, *soil*, *besmirch*, *blast*, *brand*, *rotten*, *reechy*, *foul*, *bestial*, *vile*, *swinish*, *nasty*, *rank*, *gross*, *dirty*, *garbage*, *fust*, *offal*, *gall*, or any word expressive of a want of wholesomeness or health, mental, moral, or bodily, as *madness*, *lunacy*, *distraction*, *wildness*, *ecstasy*, *malefaction*, *oppression*, *wicked*, *unrighteous*, *ungracious*, *impious*, *adulterate*, etc., opposed to all which are words importing *sanity* and *health*, as *whole*, *wholesome*, *fair*, *invulnerable*, *woundless*, *holy*, *hallowed*, *pious*, *religious*, *sanctified*, *unpolluted*, and many others.

It is hardly possible that a dramatist should, in any one play, use so many words of kindred meanings as are comprised under the heads of

Observance, Custom, Habit, Temperance, Excess, Defect, and Corruption, unless he kept these conceptions distinctly before his mind as parts of his subject, and it is evident that so profuse a use of analogous terms of various classes, all of which are closely related to one and the same moral scheme, and therefore to each other, must impart to the composition a tone that would greatly increase the effect produced by the more important representation of such conceptions in the plot, incidents, and characters. It is, therefore, fairly inferable that the illustration of the moral idea or scheme to which these conceptions may be referred as constituent parts was the design of the poet, and that he was governed by a rule in the selection of his diction.

The observance of the rule of temperance, or, in other words, of right and fitness, depends upon a perfect balance of all the faculties, mental and active, and holds the precise mean between the opposite errors of excess and defect. It is the equation of these *plus* and *minus* quantities. In Hamlet this equation is wanting, this balance is destroyed. His intellect is the *plus*, his will the *minus*, quantity. And in the first words he utters, he is made, according to the poet's usual manner of imitating in rhetorical forms the inward dispositions of his characters, to foreshadow his habitual tendency to both extremes.

"*King.* And now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son —
Ham. A *little more than kin* and *less than kind.*

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
Ham. Not so, my lord, I am *too much* i' the sun."

On the other hand, observe with what rhetorical skill the specious and hypocritical character of the King is symbolized in the false antitheses of his opening speech, in which he craftily excuses his hasty marriage with his brother's widow. Instead of an equation or mean between too much and too little, he balances extremes and brings into a forced and unnatural union the most opposite qualities.

"*King.* Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial *jointress* of this *warlike* state
Have we, as 'twere with a *defeated joy*, —
With *one auspicious* and *one dropping* eye;
With *mirth in funeral* and with *dirge in marriage*,
In *equal scale weighing delight and dole*, —
Taken to wife."

The words that Shakespeare puts into the mouths of his characters, in striking situations, are very often not merely vehicles of the thought of the speaker, but symbols also of the deeper thought of the poet.

Under the head of *right* may be placed *direct*, *straight*, *true*, *level*, *even*, *smooth*, *just*; and with *fitness* are affined *apt*, *fit*, *suit*, *sort*, *adhere*, *become*, *hand-in-hand*, *proper*, *answer*; and words signifying agreement and union, as *accord*, *agree*, *convenient*, *commutual*, *confederate*, *conjunctive*, *couplet*, *couple*, *unite*, *join*, *demi-natured*, *knit*, *colleagued*, *meet*, *encounter*, *jointress*, etc. Also *equal*

like ; opposed to which are *disjoint*, *out of frame*, *out of joint*, *divide*, *discord*, *contention*, and generally words signifying division, disorder, and want of fitness.

Under *reason*, a class may be formed of words denoting the powers, faculties, operations, functions, affections, and passions of the mind and soul. They are numerous, but familiar, and need not be detailed. They are met with on every page, and hold the same important place in this tragedy that the senses and the parts and affections of the body do in " Twelfth Night."

There may, however, be placed here a special class of words related in meaning to *craft* and *contrivance*. These words are prominent in the composition of the piece, even as the properties they denote are largely exemplified in the plots wherewith the characters strive to overreach each other. Among them are found, *device*, *trick*, *fetch*, *cozen*, *cozenage*, *plan*, *plot*, *forge*, *shuffle*, *juggle*, *invent*, *shape*, *form*, *figure*, *fashion*, *practice*, in its bad sense. Also *project*, *purpose*, *aim*, *intent*, *design*, *purport*, *drift*, *scope*, and others.

With *reason* may be placed *discourse*, which, according to Richardson, is " to *pass* from topic to topic, from thought to thought, from premises to conclusion, to talk or write or speak at large, to converse, to reason, to debate or expand or extend the view, the contemplation of the mind."

In the play, we have the phrase, " discourse of reason," *i. e.*, the discursive understanding, the

speculative intellect, the excess of which in Hamlet is the great intellectual feature of the play; and, according to Shakespeare's usual method of reflecting, in the rhetoric and composition of his pieces, some prominent trait in his leading character, or point in the plot, or thought in the organic idea, the style of this tragedy, taken as a whole, is strikingly discursive and varied. The successive scenes pass from topic to topic and subject to subject, so widely different in tone of thought and mode of treatment, that there are almost as many different styles in the piece as there are dialogues or soliloquies. Compare Polonius's precepts to Laertes with Hamlet's colloquy with Osric, or Hamlet's narrative of the events of his voyage with Polonius's speech to the King on the cause of Hamlet's madness; or the instructions to the players with the description of Ophelia's drowning, or the four great soliloquies of Hamlet together; the first (Act I., Sc. 2), emotional, a sigh of weariness over "the uses of the world;" the second (Act II., Sc. 2), egotistical, a waste of passion on mere imaginings; the third (Act III., Sc. 1), speculative, an attempt of the mind to pry into futurity and weigh the chances of suicide, the direst form of self-defeat; and the fourth (Act IV., Sc. 4), ethical, and deducing a rule of conduct from example; or compare any or all of these scenes together, and the variety and discursiveness which characterize the style of the play will be obvious.

In addition to this general discursiveness of style, Shakespeare gives to particular passages a rhetorical form, that is imitative of that *consequence* and *succession* of thought which constitute discourse. "The succession of conceptions in the mind, series or consequences, one after another, may be orderly, as when the former thought introduceth the latter, and this is *discourse*" (Hobbes). Take, for instance, the King's promise to —

> "Drink to Hamlet's better breath,
> And in the cup an union shall he throw
> Richer than that which *four successive kings*
> In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cup,
> And let *the kettle to the trumpet* speak,
> The *trumpet to the cannoneer* without,
> The *cannons to the heavens*, the *heavens to earth*,
> 'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.'"

Not only does the notion of succession run through this passage, but the phrases hang together like the successive links of a chain.

It may be remarked that, though the King's habit of intemperance is kept before us, none of the effects of intemperance appear in him. He is always cool and clear-headed; his vigorous intellect is always consequential. A systematic order of thought is the habit of his mind.

The King's rebuke of Hamlet's excessive grief is another example of a strictly connected consequential discourse, through which runs the notion of consequence itself: —

"'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these *mourning duties* to your father;
But you must know *your father lost a father;*
That *father lost, lost his;* and the *survivor* bound
In filial *obligation* for some term,
To do *obsequious* sorrow; but to *persevere*
In obstinate condolement is *a course*
Of impious stubbornness," etc.

Another instance of this style is the King's speech to Gertrude, suggested by Ophelia's craziness, in which he enumerates the sorrows and troubles consequent upon Polonius's death (Act IV., Sc. 5).

Consequence is obvious in the following figure: —

"One woe doth tread upon another's heels,
So fast they follow."

And on this same notion, which, together with *observance*, *custom*, and *habit*, pervade the play, turns the well-known stroke of humor in Polonius's speech to Reynaldo, where the old logician, through dereliction of memory, loses the connection of his thoughts, and comes to a dead stop at the words "closes in the *consequence*."

With *consequence* may be classed *event*, *issue*, *effect*, *sequel*, *follow*, *occurrent*, *succession*, and other similar terms. Also *immediate*, *next*, *near*.

Under *action* are classed *exploit*, *deed*, *achievement*, *enterprise*, *undertaking*, *affair*, *business*, *work*, *do*, *act*, *perform*, *faculty*, *function*, *operant*, etc.

Action, being the outward exponent of the will, it is necessarily a notion of prime importance in

a play that treats of morality. All obedience is practical; duty is virtue in action. And the play contrasts the contemplative with the active life, pronouncing emphatically for the superior morality of the latter; as is clearly implied by the catastrophe, in which the heroic Fortinbras —

> "Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd,
> Makes mouths at th' invisible event,"

wins a kingdom, while the philosophic Hamlet, unable to act through excess of contemplation, perishes with the painful consciousness of having passed an ineffective life, and of leaving a "wounded name" behind him. "In the theatre of human life," says Bacon, in a chapter on ethics, published a year or two after this play attained celebrity, "it is only for God and angels to be spectators," — and the reason he assigns for the higher merit of action is that, while contemplative life regards only "private good and the pleasure or dignity of an *individual* person" the active keeps in view "the good of *communion*, which regards Society and usually goes by the name of Duty," a doctrine, which, as Shakespeare always exhausts his subject, is distinctly stated also in the play; for instance in Laertes's warnings to Ophelia to check her affection for Hamlet, inasmuch as he cannot marry her for the reason that his individual will must be governed by the higher duty he owes the state.

> "For on his *choice depends*
> The *sanity and health of the whole state.*"

Active life, then, being that in which the highest form of morality appears, it is idealized in those characters, events, and accessories which give to this tragedy a background of the greatest bustle and activity. The action of the story is laid at the court of a military kingdom. The opening scene brings before us sentinels on their posts, discoursing of wars and rumors of wars; and before them moves the armed Ghost of their late warlike king. In the progress of the play embassies are sent to neighboring monarchs to repress levies of soldiers and preparations for invasion; armies march and remarch on expeditions of conquest; even the revelry of the court is accompanied by martial music and salvos of ordnance; the dying moments of Hamlet, the philosopher, are broken in upon by the distant drums of the conquering Fortinbras, and his body is borne off "with soldier's music and the rites of war;" while the play closes with a peal of cannon. All this is typical of the most earnest action. Unless embodied in deeds, existence is but a shadow. War and conquest are the most emphatic form of this craving for self-assertion in active natures, and its spirit is impersonated in Fortinbras (strong-arm) who is kept moving in the background, as a relief and foil of that picture of the secret inner life depicted in "Hamlet," which escapes, as far as possible, from all action, rests content in thought alone, and ever feels a material existence a weight and clog upon the

free flight of the spirit. This contrast is further enforced by the repeated use of metaphors drawn from the military art. They are, perhaps, the most numerous class of any in the piece, and when applied to the illustration of the moral sentiments, they have a very striking effect; for instance:—

> "When sorrows come, they come not *single spies*,
> But in *battalions*."
>
> "So, haply slander,
> Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
> As *level* as the *cannon to his blank*,
> Transports his poison'd shot, may *miss* our name
> And hit the *woundless* air."
>
> "Sit down awhile,
> And let us once again *assail* your ears
> That are so *fortified* against our story."
>
> "Sir, in my heart there was a kind of *fighting*
> That would not let me sleep; methought I lay
> Worse than the *mutines in the bilboes*."

Action and *reaction* are inseparable and therefore words are classed here, affined in meaning with *reaction;* such as *return*, *revert*, *retrograde*, *counter*, *turn back*, *go back*, etc. But the notion of reaction is less conspicuous in the diction than in the similes and metaphors. In this play, the great law of reaction represents the working of Providence, and it has been pointed out how deeply this thought is interwoven into the characters, their plots, schemes, and other incidents of the play. The following passages furnish thoughts

analogous to that reaction or self-defeat that lurks in the wicked devices of man.

"So that my arrows,
Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,
Would have *reverted to my bow again*,
And not *where I had aim'd them*."

"So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It *spills itself in fearing to be spilt*."

"O timid soul! that *struggling to be free*
Art more engaged."

"And like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And *break your own neck down*."

"*Youth to itself rebels*, though none else near."

"And then this 'should' is like a *spendthrift sigh*
That *hurts by easing*."

"For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar."

"Their *defeat*
Does by their *own insinuation grow*."

These examples might be multiplied, but the above are sufficient to show the ingenuity with which Shakespeare works his organic idea into his metaphors and other figures of speech.

Analogous to the contrivances of the mind that defeat themselves, is the excess of passion that is self-destroyed. Examples will be found in quotations already made. Similar thoughts are contained in the following: —

"For goodness growing to a *plurisy*
Dies in his own too-much."

> "This is th' *imposthume* of *much wealth and peace*
> That *inward breaks* and *shows no cause without*
> *Why the man dies.*"

The following lines are a good specimen of methodical diction, and conclude with a simile that turns on the notion of a self-destructive purpose: —

> "Alas! how shall this *bloody deed* be *answer'd?*
> It will be *laid* to us, whose *providence*
> Should have *kept short, restrain'd* and *out of haunt,*
> This *mad* young man; but, so much was our *love,*
> We would not *understand* what was *most fit;*
> But, like the owner of a *foul disease,*
> To keep it from *divulging, let it feed*
> *Even on the pith of life.*"

Another instance is the following: —

> "To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;
> And, like the *kind life-rendering pelican*
> *Repast them with my blood.*"

A *drama* is, literally, a *deed* or *act;* and this tragedy, besides illustrating the principles of real action, considers also those of ideal or dramatic action. This not only accounts for but justifies the introduction of the speeches from the old tragedy, the criticisms on dramatic art, the instructions to the players, the play within the play, the comments on the state of the stage in Shakespeare's time, and allusions, generally, to playing and acting, of all which there is, of course, no hint in the story on which the play is founded, but which are, nevertheless, harmonious with the

organic idea and proper action of the piece. "Hamlet" is the ideal of a drama, or more particularly of a tragedy, and binds up in itself the constituent elements and principles of all tragedy. As a work of art, a tragedy is the representation of one entire action, wrought into a plot or coherent tissue of cause and effect, and terminating in a catastrophe. In "Hamlet," the *action* of the piece and the chief point of interest is the purposed *performance of a great action;* the *movement* of the plot is carried forward by the *plots* and *counterplots* of the characters, and not merely the main catastrophe, but also the minor incidents, illustrate that law of *reaction* or *sudden turn* of events, which constitute a catastrophe in all plays. Thus Shakespeare writes a tragedy, which, while it presents the profoundest views of morality ever embodied in an artistic form, is also an exponent of the laws of dramatic composition; and in the instruction to the players, he points out that the rule of temperance, fitness, and equality (which last implies *likeness* as well as freedom from excess or defect) obtains no less in art, elocution, and acting, than in morals.

"Nor do not saw the air *too much* with your hand, thus; but use all *gently;* for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a *temperance* that may give it *smoothness.* . . . Be not *too tame neither;* but let your own *discretion* be your tutor; *suit the action to the word, the word to the action;* with this *special observance* that you *o'erstep not the modesty* of nature, for anything *so overdone* is from the *purpose* of play-

ing, whose *end*, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the *mirror up to nature;* to show *virtue her own feature, scorn her own image*, and the *very age and body of the time*, his *form* and *pressure*. Now, this *overdone* or come *tardy off*, though it make the *unskillful* laugh, cannot but make the *judicious* grieve, the *censure* of the which *one* must, in your allowance, *o'erweigh* a *whole theatre* of others," etc.

Under the head of *action*, therefore, place *play*, *theatre*, *tragedy*, *comedy*, *audience*, *write*, *actor*, *prologue*, and other words associated with the drama, or with imitation, as *image*, *counterfeit.*

Not to extend this analysis, but one word more will be taken as a radical, and that is *greatness*, as appertaining both to morality and tragedy; for, as true greatness belongs to him who governs himself, so dignity is inseparably associated with tragic representations. Under this head place *majesty*, *worth*, *excellence*, *honor*, *empire*, *imperial*, *summit*, *great*, *large*, *spacious*, *huge*, *mighty*, *lofty*, *noble*, *brave*, *royal*, *kingly*, — also such phrases as *at height*, *most of all;* also *exceedingly*, *principally*, *powerfully*, *potently*, etc.

The foregoing examination of the vocabulary is very far from being complete, such classes of words only being examined as are connected with the leading conceptions of the piece; yet it will, perhaps, suffice to indicate how strictly and methodically the organic idea governs the diction, shapes the metaphors and similes, and draws into unity the whole composition of the piece. It is not necessary to multiply quotations to explain

this method, as it is sufficiently exemplified in passages cited for other purposes. The following, however, may be taken as an example. It is a description of skill in horsemanship, a subject, which, at the first glance, seems to have but little connection with morality, yet it will be seen that the language in which it is expressed is taken from excess, defect, contrivance or device, fitness or union, carnality, to say nothing of action.

> "He grew unto his seat,
> And to such wondrous *doing* brought his horse
> As he had been *incorps'd* or *demi-natured*
> With the *brave* beast; so far he *topp'd my thought*
> That I, in *forgery* of *shapes* and *tricks*
> *Come short* of what *he did*."

Before leaving the rhetoric of the piece, however, one further point should be noted as a proof of the thoroughly organic character of the work. There is, in "Hamlet," a cluster of analogies. In the first place, the whole play represents the relation of the finite to the infinite, of the individnal to the universal. With this is analogous the mental constitution of its hero, whose habit of mind it is to pass from the particular to the general, from the practical to the abstract. A similar relation is found in the law of conscience, or the application of a general rule to a particular instance; and also in the distinction between "self-good" and "the good of communion," whence flows that law of morality which requires of the individual, as his highest duty, the sacrifice of his

own good to the welfare of the whole. These relations are reflected in the thoughts and rhetorical forms of numerous passages. The following are instances : —

" In what *particular thought* to work, I know not,
But in the *gross and scope* of my *opinion*,
This bodes," etc.

" Then if he says he loves you,
It *fits* your *wisdom* so far to *believe* it
As he in his *peculiar sect and place*
May give his *saying deed;* which is no further
Than the *main voice* of Denmark goes withal," etc.

" Your *sum of parts*
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did *that one.*"

In the passage next cited, Hamlet, having commented on the Danish custom of wassailing, —

" A *custom*
More *honor'd* in the *breach* than the *observance*,"

passes to the general reflection that men are more often judged of by one defect than by many virtues, and unconsciously hits off a class to which he himself belongs.

" So, oft it *chances* in *particular* men,
That for some *vicious mole* of nature in them,
As in their birth (wherein they are not *guilty*,
Since nature cannot *choose* his origin)
By their *o'ergrowth* of some *complexion*
Oft *breaking* down the *pales* and *forts* of *reason;*
Or by some *habit*, that *too much o'erleavens*
The *form* of plausive *manners;* — that these men —
Carrying, I say, the stamp of *one defect*,

Being nature's *livery* or fortune's star —
Their *virtues* else, be they as *pure* as *grace*,
As *infinite* as man may undergo,
Shall in the *general censure* take *corruption*
From that *particular fault;* the *dram* of [base]
Doth all the *noble* substance [oft corrupt]
To his own scandal."

In the comments of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern on the King's fears for his safety on account of Hamlet's madness, the doctrine is laid down of the higher duty that is owed to society; though in this case, the fawning courtiers, in order to flatter and fall in with the King's wishes, point to this duty as a reason for shielding his person from danger, and for pursuing his designs against Hamlet. It will be perceived that the idea of the relation of the one to the many runs through the passage, and the simile of "the wheel," used to illustrate "the cease of majesty," is suggestive of device and contrivance.

"*Guildenstern.* Most *holy* and *religious fear* it is
To keep those *many*, *many* bodies safe
That live and feed upon your *Majesty.*
Rosencrantz. The *single* and *peculiar life* is *bound*
With all the *strength* and *armor* of the *mind*
To *keep* itself from *noyance;* but much more
That *spirit*, upon whose *weal* depend and rest
The *lives of many.* The *cease* of *majesty*
Dies not *alone;* but, like a gulf, doth draw
What's *near* it with it; it is a *massy wheel*
Fixed on the *summit* of the *highest* mount,
To whose *huge* spokes *ten thousand lesser things*
Are *mortis'd* and *adjoin'd;* which, when it *falls*,
Each *small annexment*, *petty consequence*,

Attends the *boisterous ruin.* Never *alone*
Did the king sigh, but with a *general* groan."

The subject of "Hamlet" being the mind and soul of man and their disturbing causes, and more particularly the aberration from duty through the confidence of the intellect in its own powers, Shakespeare, according to his usual method of illustrating, under various forms and conditions, the faculty that causes the error, pours into his play, from the stores of his psychological knowledge, a great variety of peculiar mental phenomena, unusual and curious states of the mind and feelings, different modes and laws of mental action, and abrupt transitions of thought under the influence of passion or conflicting motives; whilst he has left untouched scarce a passion or emotion which that wonderful instrument, the human soul, in its vast compass, is capable of experiencing. Though in "Hamlet" there is but little external action, there is immense intellectual and moral activity. Every scene derives a special interest from its furnishing some illustration of peculiar mental action, or of the mind in its relations to art and culture, or as affected by decay, disease, delirium, or other disturbing causes. This is true throughout the play, from the first startled exclamation of Bernardo in the opening scene — "Who's there?" betraying a hidden fear (for Bernardo has once seen the Ghost about that very hour and place, and his excited imagination leads him to anticipate the challenge of the unconcerned

sentinel) — to the last scene, in which Horatio is eager to explain the tragic catastrophe, —

> "Even while *men's minds are wild*, lest more mischance
> On *plots* and *errors happen*."

This will be made plain by a cursory review of some of the leading scenes of the play.

Act I. Sc. 1. The play opens with an instance of introverted feeling, — the effect of a lonely watch on a cold night, which turns back the feelings on themselves, and creates a despondent and anxious state of mind. This is expressed by Francisco's saying, —

> "'Tis bitter cold,
> And I am *sick at heart*."

This sounds the key-note of the piece. The action of Hamlet is internal, not external; its stage is in the mind, not in the world of sense. And though the minds of the characters are so laid open to us that we can detect beneath their words their real sentiments and motives, they are dark, hidden, and dissembling towards each other.

This scene presents the two extremes that form the picture and the background; the Ghost, or disembodied spirit, freed from all active participation in the concerns of this life, on the one hand; and the night-watch and soldiers, discoursing of the bustle and preparation for war, on the other.

Act I. Sc. 2. Here is opposed the energetic

King, with his practical mind and business ability, to Hamlet's dreamy meditativeness and subjective disposition.

Observe with what system the mind of the King passes from one topic to another; first plausibly excusing his marriage with the widow-queen; then taking up the claims of Fortinbras; then the means of resisting them; and, after this dispatch of business, turning to Laertes and attending to his request, and finally addressing Hamlet; in each case commencing with the formula, "And now," etc.

Hamlet's soliloquy, which immediately follows, reveals the want of balance and of steadiness in his mind, which, through habits of dreamy meditativeness, loses its firm grasp of facts, and substitutes for them its own imaginings. The period from his father's death to his mother's marriage is plain matter of fact, which no sound mind could mistake, and Hamlet at first states it accurately; but, as his feelings rise, his mind slides away from the fact, and measures the time by his aggravated sense of the indecent haste of the marriage. But observe that, in painting this picture of an unbalanced mind, Shakespeare takes his colors, or rather his canvas, from this very notion of inequality, — a want of temperance, fitness, and decorum being the theme of Hamlet's comments. This is especially marked by comparisons of things wholly unlike or unequal: —

"So excellent a king; *that was, to this,*
Hyperion to a Satyr."

"But *no more like my father,*
Than I to Hercules."

This scene closes with Hamlet's examination of Horatio with regard to the appearance and action of the Ghost, and is a striking display of the inward current of thought in a mind eager to gather the data, on which to rest some conjecture respecting a fearful mystery.

Act I. Sc. 3. Polonius's precepts to Laertes are an instance of the *gnomic* style, — a collection of golden sayings or maxims of conduct, the results of deep reflection and long experience.

Act I. Sc. 4. This scene closes with a fine example of Shakespeare's finish, and of the skill with which he causes the moral ideas, that are the soul and life of his piece, to pervade and circulate throughout the minutest portions of its organism. We have in it the loss of mental balance, the notions of consequence, of fitness and obedience, the corruptibility of man, together with the idea that, whatever the event, it is in the hands of Providence: —

"*Horatio.* He *waxes desperate* with *imagination.*
Marcellus. Let's *follow;* 'tis not *fit* thus to *obey* him.
Hor. Have after; to *what issue will this come?*
Mar. Something is *rotten* in the *state* of Denmark.
Hor. *Heaven will direct it.*"

Act I. Sc. 5. Interview between Hamlet and the Ghost. The speech of the Ghost has a style

distinct from that of any other portion of the play. This peculiarity is derived from its archaisms and its uncommon imagery. Its whole tone is solemn and unearthly. Even the passions of the Ghost are shadowy, — pale, cold reflexes of the warmth of life.

The state of Hamlet's feelings, and the singular disturbance of his mind after the disappearance of the Ghost, afford a curious psychological study. His wildness and flightiness are generally explained, no doubt correctly, as being an example of that *law of reaction* (so frequently exemplified in the play) by which the mind and feelings, when carried too far in one direction, attempt, with an instinctive cunning, to regain their balance by passing to the opposite extreme. The subterranean speeches of the Ghost, so strongly condemned by some critics, seem to be introduced for the purpose of developing this singular state of Hamlet's mind, and thus adding a curious specimen to the varied psychology of the play.

In this scene, Hamlet adopts the resolution of feigning madness. As the mode in which he does this has a bearing upon the vexed question of the reality of his insanity, and as the scene itself seems to show in what manner and by what steps his mind is led up to this resolve, a few remarks will be hazarded upon it.

The effect of the Ghost's story upon Hamlet is, at first, to shake and disorder his mind, even to the extent of partial delirium. He cannot at

once step out of the circle in which he has stood with the supernatural, and resume his customary relations with the world around him. The last words of the Ghost, "Hamlet, remember me," — so touching in their mournfulness, so awful in their consequences, — fill his mind to the exclusion of every other thought; but habit soon makes its influence felt; he vents his bitterness in soliloquy, and generalizes on the very facts that cause his excitement.

Upon the entrance of his friends, though his mind still rocks under the influence of the supernatural, he perceives the necessity of secrecy and self-control. Still his words are "wild and whirling." But he makes of his friends "one poor request," —

"Never make known what *you have seen* to-night."

They comply, with a promise; to which he then desires they should give the sanction of an oath. This they do by a verbal adjuration. Not yet satisfied, he demands that they shall swear upon his sword. To this they demur, — only, however, upon the ground that it was unnecessary, they having already sworn, — when suddenly beneath their feet is heard the voice of the Ghost commanding them to swear. At this dread sound, Hamlet's excitement, which had begun to abate, is carried again to the highest pitch, but not, in this case, accompanied with terror or awe; on the contrary, the secret tie that now exists between

himself and the apparition puts him upon a friendly footing, as it were, with the supernatural, of which the presence, and even the alarm, of his companions, — and more than all, the auxiliar sympathy of the Ghost in thus reënforcing his request, — make him more conscious, so that his overwrought feelings, instead of expressing themselves in exclamations of horror or dread, pass into the opposite extreme, and find utterance in a wild levity and familiarity: —

> "Ah ha, *boy!* say'st thou so? art thou there, *truepenny?*
> Come on, — you hear this *fellow in the cellarage*, —
> *Consent to swear.*"

Horatio demands that he "propose the oath."

> "*Hamlet.* Never to speak of *this that you have seen*,
> Swear by my sword."

And, again, from the earth beneath them is the mandate repeated.

Shifting his ground in order to reassure his wondering friends, Hamlet again proposes the oath: —

> "Come hither
> And lay your hands again upon my sword;
> Never to speak of this that *you have heard*,
> Swear by my sword."

And, for the third time, the performance of the ceremony is defeated by the voice of the Ghost enjoining it.

Hamlet, still continuing his flighty speeches, proposes another removal: —

"Well said, *old mole!* can'st work i' th' ground so fast?
A *worthy pioneer!* Once more remove, good friends."

Yet, distracted as he is, his mind catches a new alarm from his very distraction. How shall he keep the secret himself? To return to the court and maintain his usual demeanor, is impossible; on the other hand, to reveal the slightest knowledge of his father's murder, is to endanger his life and defeat his purpose. How, then, shall he keep his promise to the Ghost, and yet how justify the delays that he is already inwardly conscious will intervene through his habits of inaction and his invincible repugnance to set right the disjointed time? And here his pride of intellect comes to the rescue: to slay the King in such manner as to endanger his own life, would be an act of supreme folly, and imply a pitiful lack of resources: he can plot and mine deeper than that. Taking the hint at once from his own whirling words, and the perplexity of his friends, he determines to counterfeit madness and hide his feelings and designs under the wild and excited speech which, in any event, he can scarcely master. This plan, he flatters himself, will insure the certain and safe execution of the mandate; for his purpose will be disguised, and its performance excused by his supposed madness. That such were his motives must be inferred, for such was his subsequent line of conduct. It is, moreover, perfectly characteristic of Hamlet, whose will, unguided by principle, is always determined

by the immediate circumstances before him. Thus it is with his device of the play, which was a plan suggested by the chance arrival of the players, and thus he finds, in the circumstance that the King is at his prayers, a reason for deferring his purpose. This feigning of madness is a similar artifice, suggested by the immediate occasion, and transferring the execution of his design from the domain of the will to the intellect. Its first effect, however, is a respite from the necessity of slaying the King out of hand, and this tends to tranquillize his mind. But, having adopted this resolution, he entirely *alters* the *terms of the oath*, and, dwelling now with a mind comparatively at ease upon various minute particulars, he requires of his friends, — not that they should never speak of what they had *seen or heard*, — but that they should, by neither word nor gesticulation, intimate that his antic disposition is put on, or that they "know aught of him." This change in the oath marks the change in the current of his thoughts, and a springing-up in his mind of a plan of action. It seems, therefore, that his feigned madness is a stroke of cunning to escape the dilemma he is in, — aiming at the postponement while it points to the performance of his purpose, — and that it is suggested by the real disturbance of his mind, and his half-delirious comments on the movements of the Ghost.

Act II. Sc. 1. Polonius's instructions to Reynaldo have no connection with the plot, and are

introduced as an illustration of a mind in decay. The scene is one of those (of which there are several in the play) in which the action of the play eddies and revolves upon itself, having movement without progression. This is analogous with the mental action of Hamlet.

Act II. Sc. 2. This scene presents a variety of styles as well as illustrations of different forms of mental culture.

In it we have the interview with the ambassadors from Norway, their concise statements of facts affording a balance of outward active life to so much that is internal and mental. This is succeeded by Polonius's *oration*, as Maginn well calls it, the formal rhetoric and logic of which, devoid of all matter, exemplify his decay of mind as well as a peculiar phase of mental culture. The speech of Polonius is perfect in all its parts; it has its exordium, its statement of the subject, its proofs, its argument, its deduction, and its peroration, to say nothing of its affected modesty and real conceit, its assumed candor and attempted wit, its promised brevity and actual prolixity, its claims to confidence on the score of the good character of the speaker, and its appeals to the sympathy of the hearers.[1]

Following this and in contrast with it is Hamlet's feigned madness, which, under apparent incoherency and rejection of all form and method, displays the strictest logic and power of seizing

[1] See Maginn's character of Polonius.

the remotest analogies. Hamlet's method of simulating madness is to drop the logical connections of his thoughts, so that what he utters seems fragmentary and incoherent.

After this enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with the intent of probing Hamlet. This gives still a different style of dialogue; and to this succeeds the account of the strolling players and of the condition of the stage, together with Hamlet's remarks and criticisms upon dramatic art.

Upon the entry of Polonius, Hamlet, as a metaphysician, illustrates to his companions the mental law of association by prophesying that the old man had come to tell him of the arrival of the players, and then, addressing him, strikes the chord of association by alluding to the time "when Roscius was an *actor* in Rome," whereupon Polonius at once ejaculates, "The *actors* are come, my lord."

Association, as the law of memory, is also illustrated in Hamlet's attempts to catch the line of the old play: —

"If it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see —

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,' —

'tis not so; *it begins with Pyrrhus:* —

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms.'"

The extract from the old play which follows is introduced as *poetry*. The style of this fragment, a description of the death of Priam, is epic, and

adds a new variety to the play. It is elevated as much above the ordinary dramatic verse as the latter is above the language of common life, not merely to distinguish it as poetry from the poetry of the play, but to exemplify on an exaggerated scale the pathos and imagery which, by stimulating the mind and feelings to unwonted activity, are the cause of the pleasure that poetry imparts, while at the same time it subjects both imagination and passion to law by the numbers and modulation of the verse.

Mark, too, the interest that Hamlet takes in this fragment. He detects in the circumstances of Pyrrhus an analogy to his own. Pyrrhus, like himself, is avenging his father's murder, and Pyrrhus, too, for a moment, like himself, —

> "*A neutral to his will and matter*
> *Does nothing.*"

Hamlet's soliloquy that ensues starts the question of tragic sympathy, —

> "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her?"

and upon the power of works of imagination over the conscience — "the *cunning* of the scene" — he bases his experiment upon the King.

Act III. Sc. 2. Hamlet's instructions to the players are a beautiful instance of the *didactic* style.

The court play, again, written in sententious rhyming couplets, informed throughout with the

profoundest meaning of the play, has a style of its own.

Hamlet's wild and nervous exultation at the success of his stratagem breaks out in scraps of doggerel, and is another instance of the *reaction* of overstrained feeling, — an attempt of the mind to regain its balance, while it exhibits, also, Hamlet's pride in his own cunning. It is a mode, moreover, of manifesting mingled exhilaration and contempt, natural to a cultured mind and to a cultured mind only, and one quick in detecting the remotest analogies.

Act III. Sc. 3. The two soliloquies, one of the King, the other of Hamlet, furnish a curious moral and mental contrast.

The King's soliloquy is the voice of a tortured conscience, which tears aside every veil with which he hides the moral leprosy of his soul: the soliloquy of Hamlet, who is too conscientious to perpetrate the wickedness he meditates, is, on the other hand, the mere play of his intellect, devoid of all moral motive; a cool, abstract admeasurement of revenge; the logic of retaliation: a nice mental adjustment of the reparation to the wrong.

Act IV. Sc. 2. After the death of Polonius, Hamlet affects a still wilder madness than before, but this he does by holding still less in restraint his invective, his contempt, and his personalities towards those around him. These scenes, however, are followed by the grand ethical soliloquy upon the ambition of Fortinbras and his own in-

ertness, in which his profound and philosophical genius appears to the greatest advantage.

This, in turn, is succeeded by the scenes of Ophelia's craziness, but too sad a form of mental disease.

Sc. 7. The description of Ophelia's drowning is lyrical and adds a new variety to the style.

Act V. Sc. 1. The colloquy of the Clowns affords still another distinct mode of thought and speech, while in the parody of the case of Dame Hales are ridiculed the refinements of logic, or in the words of Warburton, "scholastic divisions without distinction, and of distinctions without a difference."

The riddle of the grave-digger, which seems to his companion so easy to be guessed, furnishes a humorous example of that confidence in its own reach with which the mind addresses itself to the solution of every problem, and its sudden recoil when, after the first strain, it finds itself inadequate to the task.

> "*First Clown.* Aye, tell me that and unyoke.
> *Second Clown.* Marry, *now I can tell.*
> *First Clown.* To't.
> *Second Clown.* Mass, *I cannot tell.*"

Here, in this church-yard, where everything speaks of mortality, here the politician, notwithstanding his craft, the courtier, notwithstanding his flattery, the lawyer, notwithstanding his vouchers, discover that the grave-digger has a deeper cunning than any of them, and that his

contrivances outlast all other devices of human wit. In this scene, which mingles the solemn and grotesque, the contrast chiefly dwelt upon is that between the cultured Hamlet and the Clowns, with their "traditional wit treasured up, like a tune, for use," but the real contrast lies between the fullness of intellectual life in Hamlet, whose mind expatiates throughout the realms of thought, and traces, in imagination, the dust of Alexander to a beer-barrel, on the one hand, and the empty skull, still more eloquently suggesting the nothingness of all this discursive thought, on the other.

Observe that Hamlet's peculiarities have all increased upon him as the play has gone forward. His disposition to escape from the actualities of life into far-fetched and useless speculations, which the well-balanced mind of Horatio gently reproves as being "to consider too curiously," is strengthened. He begins, in some measure, to take his own imaginings for realities, — the incipiency of insanity, — as when narrating to Horatio his discovery on shipboard of the plot against his life, of which Horatio previously knew nothing, he begins by saying, "You do remember all the circumstance?" evidently confounding his own thought with real occurrences. Horatio, with unfeigned surprise, exclaims, "Remember it, my lord!"

But the most signal instance of this nascent insanity is the delirium he displays at the grave of Ophelia. This "towering passion," as he calls

it, seems to be the result of intolerable mental anguish. He is suddenly confronted with circum stances which appear to brand him as worse than a murderer. His curiosity is, at first, awakened by the approach of a funeral train, the "*maimed rites*" of which betoken that —

> "The corse they follow, did with *desperate* hand
> *Fordo its own life.*"

He soon gathers that this suicide is — Ophelia! and that his own rash conduct has driven her to madness and self-destruction. This is a blow that for a moment bereaves him of words. His mother's allusion to the bridal bed, Laertes' denunciation of him as her murderer, in short, every circumstance, gives poignancy to his grief and remorse. He cannot gainsay the facts, yet the very agony of love which rises in his heart, asserts that he is guiltless of all purposed evil. He is and is not guilty. Bewildered by conflicting passions, he loses a true perception of the relations of things. He forgets that his presence is wholly unknown to the bystanders; and when Laertes, in the extravagant demonstration of his feelings, leaps into the grave and calls upon the attendants to bury both the quick and the dead, it seems to Hamlet a bravado of grief that is pointed personally at him, and an insult to his love for Ophelia. Beside himself with excitement, yet with that concentration of passion that simulates calmness, he advances, claiming to know "whose grief bears

such an emphasis," and announcing himself in the true style of a champion, " This is I, Hamlet, the Dane," enters the lists, as it were, to vindicate his love for Ophelia by contending in grief with all comers. Under this extraordinary impulse, he, too, leaps into the grave. This is a state of mind which lacks only permanency to be insanity in a medical sense.

Act V. Sc. 2. His passion having subsided, Hamlet shows that he is far from being permanently insane, by giving Horatio a masterly compend of the events that led to his return from sea. It is a model of a rapid and succinct *narrative* style.

This, in turn, is contrasted by the scene with Osric, which is a specimen of the *euphuistic* style.

Then follows Hamlet's presentiment of approaching death, after which ensues his apology to Laertes, a closing instance of the fatal error of relying upon the intellect instead of the heart or moral sense for a rule of conduct. Had Hamlet, who had unintentionally caused the death of both the father and sister of Laertes, trusted to the honor and generosity of that fiery youth, and communicated to him all the facts, he would, in all probability, have disarmed his resentment and thwarted the designs of the King. Instead of this true and candid course, however, he treats Laertes to a piece of ratiocination, by which he attempts to prove that he is not only blameless, but is, after all, " of the faction that is wronged."

"What I have done,
That might your *nature*, *honor* and exception
Roughly awake, I here *proclaim* was *madness*.
Was't Hamlet *wrong'd* Laertes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself, does *wrong* Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His *madness:* if't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is *wrong'd;*
His *madness* is poor Hamlet's enemy."

This argument would have served as well had he killed the King; it is mere head-work, empty and hollow; what is worse, it is untrue. Of course Laertes believes him insincere, and does not hesitate to meet him with equal hollowness of profession.

"Hamlet" is not simply a tragic view of life; it is rather a view of life as a tragedy. So compact is the structure of the piece, that every accessory contributes to its unity of effect. The melancholy of its hero, his very costume, his inky cloak and habiliments of woe, are in keeping with the dark sinfulness — "the bosom black as death" — which throws a funereal gloom and deep shadow on this representation of life. Guilt, sorrow, and death are associated with all tragedy, but in this idealization of the woe and insanity of sin, they are the very burthen of the song. The mortality of man, his frail and carnal nature, are forced upon us in the incidents of the piece. The horrible death of Hamlet's father, and the loathsome effects of the poison upon his person; the search for the dead

body of Polonius, with Hamlet's comments that point to its dissolution; the church-yard, with its graves and skulls and dead men's bones; the funeral of Ophelia, — these are incidents which strike the chords of association that tragedy, popularly understood, is supposed to awaken. All this, too, throws into high relief the spiritual character of the hero. But even in that, sublime as it is, we see the deep-seated disease, the sin that is the source of all human wretchedness. And although Hamlet is a hero conspicuous for nothing so much as his inability to be heroic, he is not wanting either in nobility or greatness, nor are his fortunes and destiny any the less interesting. Filled at the outset of life with the highest aspirations, he is crossed by the malice of the world and his own passions, and is left to mourn over neglected duty and blighted hopes and a ruined ideal. This is the true tragedy of life, — none the less deep and solemn because common and familiar. Nor does the play, as a whole, lack any elevation or dignity in subject or treatment. On the contrary, no tale of Thebes or Pelops's line possesses so much intrinsic tragic grandeur. Its real theme is the soul of man in relation to its immortal destiny and its accountability to the Moral Governor of the Universe; and this is illustrated in the events attending the ruin of a royal house and the downfall of a dynasty of kings, consequent upon the darkest crimes, which are brought to light by a majestic apparition from the dead.

MACBETH.

THIS highly lyrical and picturesque drama differs as widely in tone and coloring from the tragedy of "Hamlet," over which is thrown the "pale cast of thought," as Macbeth, the feudal chieftain, the man of will and action, differs from the irresolute and clerkly Danish prince. In both these characters there is disproportion and want of balance, but the preponderating weights are thrown into opposite scales. In Hamlet, the power of action is defeated through a paralysis of the will, produced by excess of thought and reflection; in Macbeth, "the pauser, reason" is overborne, and the will precipitated into action through the influence of inordinate desire; the characters are, therefore, psychological opposites, and the two plays are in direct contrast with each other.

In "Hamlet," man is represented in relation to God; in "Macbeth," in relation to the State. But the relation of man to God is an inward and spiritual one. "Hamlet," therefore, treats of the soul and its faculties, its immortality, its sin, and its responsibility in the world beyond the grave. This present life is viewed but as "a passing through nature to eternity," under the guidance

of conscience, which looks to the inward motive, not the outward act; and even the errors of man, as depicted in this "tragedy of thought," spring from inward and subjective causes, and belong to the spiritual side of his nature. They are attempts of the intellect to impugn the authority of conscience by doubts, or evade its injunctions by craft.

On the other hand, the relation of man to the State is an external and corporal one; for the State can take no cognizance of the inward motive, except so far as it is expressed in the outward act. As a member of society, man is a part of an organized whole, the object of which is the general security. Self-love, or a desire of happiness, is considered the primary motive of human conduct; and prudence, or a wise regard for life, safety, and welfare, is the rule of action. "Macbeth," therefore, treats of the temporal interests of man, of his peace and prosperity, of the life and health of the body, its accidents and functions, and of the influence upon it of dreams and imagination. The rule of prudence is violated by the lawless desires of the heart, which, aiming to secure happiness by crime, invade the peace and security of others, and arouse society to retaliate upon the wrong-doer. Unlike the uncle-king in "Hamlet," who has no fear of retribution in this life, but trembles in his secret soul at the thought of answering for his sins at God's tribunal, Macbeth has no concern for what may overtake him

in the life hereafter, if he can but escape retaliation for his crimes at the hands of man. To effect this, he adopts the ready expedient of destroying all those who can endanger his safety. This leads to further crimes, which in turn multiply his fears, and drive him onward in a constantly accelerated course of violence and action.

Of the different theories with respect to the origin of the State, Shakespeare, in order to gain the highest dramatic effects, adopts, in this play, that one which regards the State as an expansion of the family. "The family," says Paley, "contains the rudiments of an empire." But the family originates in difference of sex, and, consisting of parents and a progeny sharing a common blood, is bound together by the natural law of love and good-will, which knits up the happiness of each member in the welfare of the whole. The State, consequently, as an aggregate of families, has its origin in the physiological conditions of man, and forms part of the order of nature. According to this view, the idea of a State is that of a system of relations among men of the same race, linked together by ties of blood and kindred more or less remote, and organized, in due degree and subordination, into one body corporate, of which the primary law is benevolence, and the supreme object the peace, prosperity, and happiness of the whole and of every part. The State is, therefore, called "a weal," as in the play, "the gentle weal," and even "the sickly weal." By the

same theory, the royal power is an extension of the natural authority of the parent over the child; the king is father of his people; his person is sacred, or in the figurative language of the play, he is "the Lord's anointed temple." As he is the first man in place among men, he should also be the first in manhood or virtue, in the sense of the Latin *virtus*, which comprises all the mental, moral, and physical excellences of man. What such manhood includes, may partly be inferred from the enumeration by Malcolm of "the king-becoming graces, —

> "As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
> Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
> Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude."

States are governed by laws; and laws, as defined by Montesquieu, "are the *necessary relations* which arise from the *nature of a thing*." The laws of a state — or society — must be consonant with the laws of nature, and prescribe the duties which grow out of the relations arising from the nature of man; and, inasmuch as the State is a system of such relations, and as every man must necessarily be a centre of such a system, it follows that every wise and self-governed man represents the State, of which the laws are primarily written on the human heart. No code is necessary for domestic government; the natural and reciprocal love of parent and child, together with the hope of reward and the fear of punishment, suffices for the order and happiness of the

family; and even in *civil* society, notwithstanding its numerous arbitrary and conventional enactments, there are many duties left to be enforced by natural affection and religious precept.

Of the different forms of States mentioned in history, there are none in which security, theoretically at least, was more conspicuously the object than in those founded on the feudal system; and though these States were rather military than social organizations, the poet, in order to heighten the historical air and picturesque effect of his piece, sets his *moral* picture of the State in a framework of feudalism. This accords, too, with the chronicle from which he drew his story. The leading characters are thanes or nobles, dwelling in castles or fortified strongholds, and holding their estates and titles of the king, as their liege lord, by the tenure of fealty, homage, and service. Hence the strong military cast of society, as here depicted, and hence, too, the terms of feudal laws, and the allusions to feudal customs that are to be met with in the play. Thus, in Macbeth's first speech to the king: —

> "The *service* and the *loyalty* I owe,
> In doing it, pays itself. Your *Highness' part*
> Is to *receive our duties*, and our *duties*
> Are to your *throne and state children* and *servants*,
> Which do but what they should in doing everything
> *Safe* toward your *love* and *honor*."

This expresses very clearly the relation between the feudal sovereign and his vassals; but, if we

accept Blackstone's emendation, the allusion to feudalism is still more pointed.[1]

In analogy with the foregoing idea of a State or organized society, the individual man is regarded as himself an organism, made up of a sound mind in a sound body, the various parts, powers, and faculties of which being subordinated to his reason as the governing principle, constitute his "single state of man," having for its end the attainment and preservation of health, virtue, and happiness, whilst, on the other hand, nature, or the universal frame of things "fixed fast in fate" (which is but another name for the will of God), forms but a more comprehensive organization, or "the estate of the world," as Macbeth phrases it; and the whole, from the highly ideal point of view taken in this drama, is represented as regulated and bound up into unity by being subject, alike in the moral and material worlds, to immu-

[1] Blackstone thus comments: "Read —

'*Safe* (*i. e.*, saved) toward *you* love and honor,'

and then the sense will be, 'Our duties are your children, and servants and vassals to your throne and state, who do but what they should by doing everything with a saving of their love and honor toward you.' The whole is an allusion to the forms of doing homage in the feudal times. The oath of allegiance, or *liege-homage*, to the king, was absolute and without any exception; but simple homage, when done to a subject for lands holden of him, was always with the saving of the allegiance (the love and honor) due to the sovereign. And though the expression be somewhat stiff and forced, it is not more so than many others in this play." Not more so, for instance than the following: —

"What concern they?
The *general* cause? or is it a *fee-grief*
Due to some *single* heart?"

table relations of cause and effect, by duly observing which man attains a foreknowledge of future events, and secures his welfare and prosperity.

As in every organism, so also in the State, it is both the duty and the interest of every part so to act as to promote the good of the whole, thereby securing the greatest possible benefit to itself; and, inasmuch as *happiness* or *weal* is the supreme object of the State, it is evident that the spirit of social law, as well as the sum of virtue, is comprised in doing good to others, and in promoting their welfare. And to this course is man prompted, no less by self-love, which has respect to private good, than by benevolence, which has respect to the good of others, and which includes the exercise of all the social affections, such as compassion, hospitality, gratitude, friendship, patriotism, and the charities of domestic life. In self-love, on the other hand, are rooted all the desires of the heart; it is a fundamental principle in the moral constitution of man, and, from the earliest ages of ethical science has been held, by a great school of moralists, who deny that the conscience is a uniform rule for all men, as the most powerful regulator of the desires and affections. Unlike "Hamlet," therefore, in which man is regarded as a moral agent in his individual capacity, and subject, consequently, to the rule of conscience, which looks only to the motive, and instantaneously approves or condemns any particular line of conduct, this tragedy brings into view that

scheme of morality — generally known as "the selfish system" — founded on self-love, which decides upon the rectitude of actions by forecasting their consequences with reference to the happiness or misery they are calculated to produce. Swayed by hope and fear, and aided by imagination, self-love summons before the mind the future good or future ill that is likely to follow from our actions, and is thus enabled to determine our conduct relatively to our interest. If, in making this determination, reason (ratio, relation), the faculty that apprehends the consequent in the antecedent according to the fixed order of nature, controls the desires and governs the will, both our resolves and our actions will be characterized by prudence and foresight; and we shall clearly discern that our happiness lies in the practice of benevolence and every social duty. "Conscience and self-love," says Bishop Butler, "if we understand our true happiness, always lead the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident." The same principle, even in the absence of a higher motive, is a spur to exertions to win esteem and approbation by meritorious service; nay, more, it is specially influential in drawing men to religion, — for the highest prudence will aim at the highest good, — and, in view of the insecurity of earthly happiness and the miseries of human life, will build its hopes on religion, the truths of which, revealed through God's grace in the Gospel, and accepted by faith, supersede con-

science and private judgment by the authority of the Church; while, by proclaiming love, good-will, and charity as the one comprehensive rule of conduct, they exalt prudence into duty, and insure to all believers everlasting happiness and life. In its applicability, moreover, to all the relations of life, religion is the highest expediency; it is the most important interest of the individual, and the best reason of State. As in "Hamlet," therefore, the dramatist puts forward action as the highest form of morality, and delineates a contemplative life on a background of war and expeditions of conquest, so in "Macbeth" he assumes Christianity, or the religion of peace and good-will, as the ground on which to paint his blood-stained picture of gigantic cruelty and crime. This substratum of religious ideas and sentiments crops out in the habitual views and ways of thinking of the characters; it appears in the recognition of the leading truths of revelation, even in the utterly irreligious Macbeth, but is emphasized in the account given of the pious Edward the Confessor, whose holy life and miraculous gifts form an ideal of good, that relieves and æsthetically balances the ideal of evil that is furnished by the impersonation of the treacherous hopes and malevolent desires of the heart in the Weird Sisters.

The want of religious principle is a want of true self-love; it is a defect in the organization of the state of man; a fault in the development

of his nature. And the calculations of prudence, unless guided by the higher wisdom that religion imparts, often contain within themselves a deep duplicity, and are but specious counterfeits of that virtue or moral manhood which alone possesses the stability and energy of will to resist temptation and subdue unhallowed desires. Without this support, self-love falls readily into that depravation of the rule of prudence which consists in acting for self instead of the common weal. Under the influence of desire, it throws off its allegiance to the reason and becomes subject to the selfish passions, the most potent form of which, in relation to the State, is ambition, which, springing from lust of will and pride of superior manhood, is utterly regardless of the warnings of prudence or of the good of others, and listens only to the suggestions of hope and imagination. These faculties double the strength of desire by arraying its objects in a false splendor, and promising unalloyed happiness in their possession, while by hinting an immunity from punishment they prompt to the acquisition of what the heart so eagerly covets, at whatsoever cost to the life or happiness of individuals or the peace and security of the State. Thus cruelty, murder, bloodshed, in short, every crime of ambition and every violation of the law of goodwill into which men are hurried for the fancied increase of their welfare, take their origin in the selfish desires, which reject the *forecastings of*

reason, — or the perception of the fixed connection of cause and effect, — and rely for success and gratification upon *the predictions of the imagination, inspired by hope*. Such a reliance is akin to superstition and the credulity that puts faith in vain omens and prognostics. And, like the expectations excited by such faith, the hopes of criminal ambition are, of necessity, illusory, for crime is its own avenger; it is revolt and rebellion no less against the nature and state of man than against the body politic; it is treason against the law of reason which enjoins benevolence, as well as against the precepts of religion which inculcate charity; and it engenders, both in the criminal and in society, that fear, disorder, and inward conflict which are utterly destructive of the peace and security on which alone can any solid happiness be built. In accordance, therefore, with the highly idealized view of the political and social system given in this drama, these abnormal and disturbing influences, having their origin in the false and flattering surmises of hope and imagination, are introduced under the guise of malignant supernatural beings, — revolted spirits, — who are permitted to make this world of order their theatre of action, and, so far as they can, gain an ascendency over the will of man, to throw all things into confusion. And in thus giving outward and objective form to the latent wickedness of man, the poet renders more impressive his picture of the quickening and

growth of evil in the heart, increases its poetic and picturesque effect, idealizes its horrors by opening to the imagination a view of the world of spirits and its agency in human affairs, and at the same time gives to the philosophical principles illustrated their broadest possible development.

Though, according to the moral theory on which this play is founded, the crimes of man are remanded to man for punishment, still no reference is had to "the statutes" that "purge the gentle weal." The view is far deeper, and goes behind all legislation. The law is found in the ties of blood, and the relations inherent in man's nature, of which society itself is but the outgrowth. And the picture is painted on a scale of breadth and grandeur commensurate with its philosophic depth. Crime, which grows up from a single murder to the wholesale slaughter of families, until societyis sub verted and the State disorganized, is its subject; and the criminal, in this instance, is the highest power of the State, and, as such, irresponsible to human enactments. Bloodshed is shown to create the instruments of its own punishment. It is not simply an infraction of human law; it is an outrage on humanity; a disruption of the harmony of nature, and a revolt against the ordinances of God.

> "It pours the sweet *milk of concord* into *hell*,
> *Uproars* the *universal peace*, *confounds*
> All *unity* on earth."

On this broad scale does Shakespeare draw his grand and highly imaginative picture of man in his relation to the State — a picture that exhibits the calamities and sufferings of a nation beneath the sway of a tyrant who has seized the sceptre with a bloody hand. Such a ruler is above all law and all responsibility; but he is not above the inexorable working of those moral causes that fill the mind of the murderer and traitor with guilty fears, and drive him on to acts which prove his destruction. He can "with barefaced power sweep his enemies from his sight and bid his will avouch it," but he cannot sweep from his reason the conviction that his guilt must provoke retaliation, nor from his imagination the appalling phantoms which his own deeds conjure up, and which shake his soul with guilty terrors.

In the analysis of the characters, quotations will be required by way of proof or illustration; and as such quotations will serve also as well as any passages specially selected for the purpose to exemplify the skill with which Shakespeare moulds his metaphors and diction upon a dominant idea, a brief glance will be taken here at the vocabulary of the play. The method of analyzing the diction is simply to adopt the words expressive of the leading notions involved in the organic idea (which is the same as the moral system of the play) as primitive or radical terms, and under them to class all words of similar significations. Of these different classes of words, the radical

terms, with a few examples of affined words only, will be given. No difficulty can be found in completing the classes by simply referring to the respective heads all words of analogous meanings. In the quotations, all terms affined with the radical words, that is, that stand in relation to the organic idea and are dictated by it, whether the same are here given or not, will be italicised. The verbal affinities alluded to are affinities of signification only. The analysis of the vocabulary of a play, though, no doubt, of slight interest to many readers, is of more importance than would, at first sight, appear. It furnishes the test to determine whether the idea of the play is correctly given, and unfolds such idea in detail. If the diction and rhetorical figures of a piece can be methodically arranged and classified according to an idea, it is a convincing proof that such idea was used by the poet as an organic principle to give unity to his composition. Nor, without an attentive consideration of the verbal affinities that lurk in the diction, can the depth to which such unity strikes its roots be fully perceived, nor the subtle analogies which Shakespeare makes use of to give a perfect coherence and harmony to his work be readily detected; such, for instance, as the movement of his plot (which, of course, represents the progress of events and onward movement of life) by some means or force that is analogous with the moral ground of his play. Of such analogies, "Macbeth" furnishes good examples.

The vocabulary of "Macbeth," in its prominent characteristics, is derived from the idea of a State, and from the notions incidental to such idea.

Cognate with *state* are *station*, *stablish*, *statute*, *stableness*. Literally a *state* is a *standing*, and to *stand* is to remain *fixed*, *firm*; whence a class of words denoting fixedness, permanence, or stability, such as *fix*, *stick*, *cleave*, *adhere*; *sit*, *seat*, *seated*; *put*, *plant*, *remain*, *bide*, *confirm*, *ratify*, *affeer* (i. e. confirm, a term of feudal law); also *basis*, *found*, *construct*, *build* (i. e. strengthen, stablish), and with *build*, take *building* and the names of buildings, particularly those associated with strength and massiveness, as *castle*, *pyramid*, *temple*, *palace*, *church*, *monument*, etc. So true are the rhetorical figures of the piece to the organic idea that the body of the murdered king is likened to a temple or building: —

> "Most *sacrilegious murder* has *broke* ope
> The *Lord's anointed temple*, and stole thence
> The *life* o' th' *building*."

These terms are æsthetically balanced by others implying *instability*, *infirmity*, or *destruction*, as *shake*, *tremble*, *tumble*, *topple*, *fall*, *start*, *stir*, *overthrow*, etc., and by remoter analogies, *knock*, *knell*, *knoll*, and words signifying *displacement* or change of state, as *unsex*, *unman*, *disseat*, etc.

With the idea of a State are associated the notions of *rank*, *order*, *degree*, *office*, *honor*, *dignity*, *eminence*, *title*, *name*. Also *loyalty*, *faith*, *trust*, *truth*, *service*, *duty*, *allegiance*, which last is di-

rectly suggestive of relation in the sense of a tie or *liaison* between two or more things. A State being a system of relations, the notion of relation is everywhere met with in the play. Of words affined with *tie*, there are many in the piece, as *knit*, *join*, *bind*, *gripe*, *buckle*, *grapple*, etc.

A State, as organized *society*, suggests *meeting*, *companion*, *partner*, *fellow*, *share*, *conspirer*, *consort*, *crew*, etc.

A king is included in the idea of a State. King and kin are cognate. A State is a nation, a community of kindred. The Anglo-Saxon *cyn* signifies *kin*, *kinsman*, *kindred*, *race*, *posterity*, *nation*, *people*, *kind*, *sort ;* all of which occur in the play.

The object of the State is welfare and happiness. A state is a *weal* — weal is the *sound* state of a person or thing. The Anglo-Saxon *wela* signifies *weal*, *wealth*, *prosperity*, *happiness*, *bliss*. Under this head may be placed *well*, *happy*, *riches*, *prosperous*, *foison*, *fullness*, *store*, *harvest*, etc. Also words signifying wealth, as *lands*, *jewels*, etc. Also *peace*, *content*, *comfort*, *pleasure*, *success*, *interest*, *profit*, *advantage*, etc.

To be *well* is to be *healthy*, *safe*, and *sound*. Health is from the Anglo-Saxon *haeln*, i. e. *healing*, *health*, *cure*, *safety*, *salvation*. To *heal* is to make *whole ;* wherefore place here all words signifying *wholeness*, as *perfect*, *complete*, *full*, *ended*, *end-all*, *be-all*, etc.

Cognate with *health* is *hail*, that is, to wish

health to one, as "Hail!" be in health, expressive of welcome and warmest good wishes. To *hail* is to *greet*, to *cry* or *call* to, proclaim a *salutation*, *welcome*.

"Our ancestors used *hail* instead of *ave* or a word of *well wishing*, as when they said, 'Hail, Mary,' etc. I find the name of our Lord Jesus to be in our ancient English translated *Haelende*, that is to say, Saviour."[1] Haelende is equivalent to "the good physician." The highest health and safety is that which is conferred by the grace of the Haelende, or, in the words of the play, "the grace of Grace."

Holy is from the same root, with which there are many words of kindred signification, as *sanctified*, *pious*, *gracious*, etc.

To *salute* is from the Latin *salutare* (to wish health to, to visit out of compliment,[2] *e. g.* Duncan's visit to Macbeth's castle), and this from *salus* (health, safety) which, in turn, is from *salvus*, the root of the English *safe*, through the French *sauf*.

With safety, class such words as *security*, *assurance*, *certain*, and words implying protection or defense, as *warder*, *sentinel*, *guardian*, etc.

The following words are evidently affined in signification, *weal*, *health*, *strength*, *valor*, *manhood*, *virtue*, in the Latin sense, including not only physical vigor and courage, but also the sum

[1] Verstegan, *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*; vide Richardson's *Dict.* in v.

[2] Andrews's *Lat. Lex.*

of all the corporeal and mental excellences of man, as *worth*, *virtue*, *fortitude*, *ability*, etc. Manhood, or the state of man, is the highest moral health and strength, and is the theme of the piece. The Anglo-Saxon *haeleth*, from the same root as *health*, means a *brave man*, a hero.[1]

A State is composed of men; as the ode recites, —

> "What constitutes a state?
> Men, high-minded men," etc.

and true manhood is that which is held in highest repute among men.

Valor is from Latin *valere* (*to be strong*, also to be of *value* or *worth*), and *vale* is *farewell*, *away*, *begone*. With *valor* will be classed all words denoting strength and vigor, as *stout*, *thrifty*, *hardy*, *valiant*, *prowess*, *dareful*, etc.

The bond of the State, or society, is love, benevolence, good-will. This is what Bacon calls "goodness," which he defines as "the affecting the *weal* of men," and adds, "the word humanity, as it is used, is a little too light to express it. This, of all virtues and dignities of the mind, is the greatest, being the character of the Deity. Goodness answers to the theological virtue, charity." Of goodness there is no more striking form than *hospitality*, according to its original sense of relieving the sick, aiding the destitute, providing food and lodging for the helpless stranger. This acceptation of the word is still retained in the

[1] Bosworth, *Anglo-Saxon Dict.* in v.

term "hospital." So sacred and interwoven with the life and health of man are the duties of hospitality that the courtesies of society ape this form of benevolence; for hospitality, as generally understood, consists of banquets, feasts, dinners, (one feature of which is the drinking of *pledges* and *healths*), lodging, and other modes of contributing to the pleasure and comfort of guests. This form of good-will is made conspicuous in the incidents of the piece, and is used to heighten the effect of the cruel and bloody deeds that constitute the main action; as in the supper and revel at Macbeth's castle on the night of Duncan's murder, and also in the banquet given by Macbeth on the night of Banquo's assassination. Another instance is the reception given to Malcolm at the court of the English Edward; and even the Witches, in their infernal chants, mask under hospitable greetings their deepest malignity.

> "Come, sisters, *cheer* we up his *sprites*
> And *show* the *best* of our *delights;*
> I'll charm the air to give a sound
> While you *perform* your antique round;
> That this *great king* may *kindly* say
> Our *duties* did his *welcome pay.*"

Plainly connected, therefore, with the organic idea are such words as *host*, *guest*, *stranger*, *welcome*, *banquet*, *feast*, *food*, *eat*, *drink*, *meal*, *lodger*, *inn*, etc.

Life and health, which are the weal of man,

depend upon the regular action of the various organs that make up his state or constitution. Whatever vital power may be, it is only known in phenomena or functions, which physiology, or the science of life, classifies and refers to the action of certain organs. Life is the sum of these functions, as well of the mind as of the body, so far at least as mental, and it may be added, moral faculties are dependent upon the bodily organs. In order, therefore, to keep before the mind notions connected with the life and health of man, Shakespeare introduces into his play numerous allusions to the body, its parts, organs, faculties, accidents and functions, — such as digestion, nutrition, sleep, voice, sex, lactation, respiration, growth, decay, generation, etc., together with instances of the reciprocal influences of the mind and body, — as in vision and somnambulism, and by thus incorporating into his play a doctrine of physiology, — which, taken in its broadest sense, includes psychology — he furnishes a solid basis and æsthetic counterpoise to its supernatural and spiritual elements. This, also, augments his vocabulary with a large class of words, such as those which refer to the body, its organs, parts and senses; also *vision*, *sight*, *speculation*, *gaze*, *stare*, *wink*, *glare*, and other offices of the eye, also *voice* and its functions in speech and other utterances, as *yell*, *howl*, *shriek*, etc.; also *blood*, *tears*, *milk*, and other *secretions; hunger*, *thirst; bones*, *marrow*, *skin*, *nerves*, *flesh*, with many

other words and phrases having reference to organic life. The need of clothing and habitation to man's physical welfare is also mentioned. Many striking metaphors and figures are taken from apparel, and in the following lines a direct allusion is made to the want of it: —

> "And when we have our *naked frailties* hid
> That *suffer in exposure.*"

Steevens, having explained this, adds by way of apology for the comment, "It is possible that in such a cloud of words the meaning might escape the reader." It is quite possible that the real meaning and pertinency of the passage escaped the commentator.

The organs, as in common speech, are very often put for the function, as the brain for mind, the heart for love or courage, the hand for action, and so on.

Under this head may be placed *function*, *discharge*, *perform*, *execute*, *office*, *instrument*, *corporal agent*, etc.

Among other allusions to physiological functions, there are several to parturition, from which, of course, results the parental relation, and ultimately, the State. This relation, depending on the transmission of blood, is the strongest of all social ties, and demands imperatively the exercise of love and good-will for the protection and defense of the offspring. The grief of Macduff, at hearing of the slaughter of his unprotected

children, is familiar to all readers. This relation is illustrated, likewise, from animal nature: —

> "The poor wren,
> The most diminutive of birds, will *fight*,
> Her *young ones* in her nest, against the *owl*."

Affined with the notion of this relation, are such words as *procreant*, *produce*, *birthdom*, *bring forth*, *little ones*, *children*, *babes*, *egg*, *fry*, etc.

As an instance of physiological allusion, the Porter's comments on the effects of drink upon the body, — which on this very account cannot be quoted, — may be referred to.

The temper or disposition that results from organization is called "the nature" of a man; and the doctrine that the difference of men's natures and faculties is attributable to physiological causes is exemplified by an allusion to different kinds of dogs. The passage, also, sets forth that manhood is the test of merit: —

> "*Murderer.* We are *men*, my liege.
> *Macbeth.* Aye, in the *catalogue* ye go for *men*,
> As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
> Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are clep'd
> All by the *name* of dogs: the *valued file*
> Distinguishes the *swift*, the *slow*, the subtle,
> The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
> According to the *gift* which *bounteous Nature*
> Hath in him *clos'd; whereby* he does receive
> *Particular* addition, from the *bill*
> That writes them all alike: and *so of men*.
> Now, if you have a *station* in the *file*,
> Not i' th' *worst rank* of *manhood*, say't;
> And I will put that *business* in your bosoms

Whose *execution* takes your *enemy* off,
Grapples you to the *heart* and *love* of us,
Who wear our *health* but *sickly* in his *life*
Which in his *death* were *perfect.*"

With physiology, or the science of life, *medicine*, or the art of health, is naturally connected. It is observable that among the *dramatis personæ* there are two doctors of physic, and in the diction we find *surgery*, *surgeon*, *physic*, *drug*, *poison*, *antidote*, *senna*, *rhubarb*, *bath*, *balm*, etc. Also *remedy*, *relieve*, *restore*, and other terms associated with healing.

Perfectly in keeping, too, with the physiological allusions contained in the play, is the enumeration of the parts of human and animal bodies and other ingredients, made use of by the Witches in their incantations and pharmacomancy.

The idea of organization itself, that is, parts combined in one whole by mutual relation, is several times touched upon, as in such phrases as "To *all*, *and him*, we *thirst*, *and all to all.*" So "*thanks* to *all at once* and *to each one*"

States originate in a desire of safety and happiness, and are founded in expediency. No constitution is absolutely the best, but the best possible under existing circumstances. "If it is not in the power of man," says South, "to construct even the arch of a bridge, which shall exactly correspond in its strength to the calculations of geometry, how much less can human science construct a constitution except by rendering itself

flexible to experience and expediency?" What expediency is in the State, prudence is in the individual. But prudence is self-love, guided by reason, which regulates our conduct by a foresight of consequences. This rule is frequently set aside by inordinate desire (or ambition), which, alike stimulating and stimulated by hope and imagination, relinquishes future good for present gratification, and, instead of promoting the general weal, seeks only its own end. This is revolt, both against the State and against man's nature. It is apparent, therefore, that desire, revolt, and reason, may be assumed as radicals in a vocabulary of a play which treats of the well-being of the state both of man and society.

With desire, may be classed *wish*, *ask*, *entreat*, *solicit*, *request*, *pray*, *bid*, *invite*, *summon*, etc. And as desire (*vide* Lat. *desiderium*) implies the *want* of a thing, class here *want*, *need*, *miss*, *lack*, *lose*, etc.

In preserving the unity of his composition by repeating in metaphor and phraseology the leading thoughts contained in the fundamental idea, Shakespeare assigns a large share to the faculty, the perversion or misuse of which gives rise to the main action of the piece. In this tragedy, this faculty is *desire* (of place and power), which quenches in Macbeth all kindness of nature, and impels him to the murder of Duncan which, in itself and its consequences, forms the chief interest of the play. Desires or wishes, therefore, both

benevolent and wicked, are exemplified in greetings and salutations, on the one hand, and in curses and maledictions, on the other. So naturally do men recognize the law of benevolence, that in their most casual intercourse they express wishes for the health and happiness of each other. These salutations are interspersed throughout the play, and range in form from the solemn *all hail* of the Witches to the simple *good-day*, *good-night*, *welcome*, or *adieu*. Among these are found phrases of benediction, as "God bless us," "God be with you," "God save the king." And these are balanced by evil wishes and imprecations, as —

> "Let this *pernicious hour*
> *Stand* aye *accursed* in the *calendar!*"
>
> "*Infected* be the air whereon they ride,
> And *damn'd* all those that *trust* them!"

The methodical introduction of these salutations gives, at times, an unusual form to the expression; for instance, —

> "The *love* that *follows* us sometime is our *trouble*,
> Which still we *thank* as *love*. Herein I *teach* you
> How you shall *bid God yield us* for your *pains*
> And *thank* us for your *trouble*."

The excited fancy of Lady Macbeth during the murder scene finds utterance in the following bold figure: —

> "It was the owl that *shriek'd*, the *fatal bell-man*
> That gives the *stern'st good-night*."

But the most singular instance of adherence to method in this respect is the use of an allusion to

a friendly salutation in order to describe Macbeth's furious and desperate valor in his fight with Macdonwald.

"For *brave* Macbeth (well he deserves that *name*)
Disdaining fortune, with his *brandish'd* steel,
Which smok'd with *bloody execution*,
Like *Valor's* minion *carv'd* out his passage
Till he *fac'd* the slave;
Which ne'er SHOOK HANDS, nor BADE FAREWELL to him
Till he *unseam'd* him from the *nave to the chaps*
And *fix'd* his head upon our *battlements*."

Affined in sense with *good-will* are *love*, *kindness*, *mercy*, *pity*, *gratitude*, *compunctions*, *grace*, *favor*, *thanks*, etc.

With desire might be placed *ambition*, together with *hope* and *fear*, of which the synonyms and allied terms are numerous and familiar. These passions are strong excitants of the *imagination*, a faculty that is wonderfully exemplified in this drama, and under which fall such words as *dream*, *shadow*, *mockery*, *fantastic*, *vision*, etc.

Ambition begets *treason* and *revolt;* and with *revolt* or *rebellion* may be taken all words expressive of *contention* or *opposition*, as *fight*, *broil*, *battle*, and many others. Also, phrases such as *face to face*, *beard to beard*, *point to point*, etc.

Revolt, as destructive of *unity* or *wholeness*, on which depend life, health, peace, happiness, etc., introduces a very extensive class of words, which are opposites or correlatives of those classed under *State*, *weal*, *health;* as *hurt*, *harm*, *danger*, *murder*, *slaughter*, *kill*, *quell*, *death*, etc. Also, *wound*, *gash*,

stab, *rend*, *rip*, *cut*, *carve*, *trench*, *hew*, *hack*, etc. Also, *consume*, *waste*, *spend*, *quench*, *drown*, etc. Also, *fell*, *cruel*, *savage*, *fiend*, *malice*, *grief*, *misery*, *pain*, etc. Also, words implying *rupture* or *division*, as *break*, *breach*, and others; also, words denoting *confusion* or *disorder*, as *hurly-burly*, *uproar*, *clatter*, *wrack*, etc. And particularly terms significant of *duplicity*, or *doubleness*, as *equivocate*, *palter*, *juggle*, *lie*, *mask*, *riddle*, and others.

Though this tragedy is "total gules" throughout, *revolt*, not bloodshed, is its predominant thought. Treason and murder, implying revolt against the State, nature and reason, or more generally and abstractly, revolt as involving civil strife, internal dissension, an inward conflict of contrary principles, self-contradiction or opposition, a division and contention of a thing against itself; these are the thoughts that prevail in "Macbeth" and are illustrated not more strikingly in the direct instances of the rebellion of Macdonwald and the treason of Cawdor than in the more hidden and analogous cases of the equivocations of the fiend "that lies like truth." This principle explains the structure and style of the whole piece; its strong contrasts, its juxtaposition of opposites, its abrupt transitions, its harsh metaphors. "It is a huddling together," says Hazlitt, "of fierce extremes, a war of opposite natures, which of them shall destroy the other. Every passion brings its fellow contrary, and the thoughts pitch and jostle against each other as in

the dark." Treachery and revolt receive their fullest exposition in the murder of Duncan, which, being the six-fold assassination of a man, a king, a kinsman, a benefactor, a friend, and a guest, is the height of malevolence and inhumanity. The confusion and distrust that follow so violent a sundering of the most sacred natural and social ties, throw doubt and equivocalness over all things. No appearance, however fair, but is suspected of concealing its opposite; angelic brightness and the brows of grace may cover the most fiendish purposes; the serpent is hid under every flower; daggers lurk in smiles, and men feel as if their fates "hid in an auger-hole, may rush and seize them." This duplicity, doubleness, or inward struggle of contraries, is repeated constantly in the phraseology and similes, of which a few instances may be quoted.

> "As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
> Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
> So from that *spring* whence *comfort seem'd to come*
> *Discomfort swells.*"

This is analogous to the treacherous ambiguities of the Witches, who promise security, but insure destruction.

> "His *wonders* and his *praises* do *contend*
> *Which should be thine* or *his.*"
>
> "I have drugg'd their possets
> That *death* and *nature* do *contend* about them
> *Whether they live or die.*"
>
> "My *plenteous joys,*
> *Wanton* in *fullness, seek to hide themselves*
> *In drops of sorrow.*"

"Such *welcome* and *unwelcome things at once*
'Tis *hard to reconcile.*"

"There is no *flying hence* nor *tarrying here.*"

"*Father'd* he is, and yet *he is fatherless.*"

But not to multiply instances of the repetition of this thought, one more example only will be cited, and that for the purpose of pointing out the ingenuity with which Shakespeare causes the ruling idea to pervade the minutest particulars of his work.

"*Macbeth.* What is *the night?*
Lady Mac. Almost *at odds* with *morning, which is which.*"

As, by the theory of the play, the State is a system of relations, the rule of action must be derived from the reason, the faculty of relations. This rule is wisdom, or prudence, which is self-love guided by reason, and determines the expediency of actions relatively to our good, by calculating their consequences. Prudence, or providence, is the same as foresight, a notion which runs throughout the play. It appears in the diction in such words as *prophesy*, *harbinger*, *prospect*, *augur*, and others which refer to the *future* or the *coming on of time*. The vaticinations of the Witches are the mainspring of the action, which ends with their fulfillment. The beginning, middle, and end of the action are thus distinctly marked, and this greatly aids in imparting to the work that surpassing unity that is the admiration of all readers.

Reason is the faculty of calculation. The Latin

ratio, the etymon of reason, through the French *raison*, primarily signifies a *reckoning*, an *account*, a *computation;* and on the principle that the meanings of the Latin etymon may be placed with the English derivative we have *reckon*, *account*, *compt*, *audit*, *tale* (i. e. reckoning), *measure*, *proportion.*

Ratio also means a *list*, a *register*, to which add *calendar*, *catalogue*, *file*, *bill*, etc.

Ratio, furthermore, signifies *respect*, *relation*, which is the measure, proportion, or bearing one thing has to another. *Relation*, also, is the synonym of *report.* The French *rapport* has both meanings, that of a *tie* or *relation* and a *report.* All the shifting life of the world is but the incessant interchange of relations, and news of passing events, which are constantly altering the old, and establishing new relations, are themselves called reports or relations. The exercise of the reason, moreover, in tracing consequences and relations, was called in Shakespeare's day, *discourse.* This word also means that which is spoken or related. We may, therefore, place here *report*, *relation*, *tidings*, *news*, *intelligence*, *story*, *oracle*, *speech.* Also, *letter*, *message*, *missive*, *commission*, *post*, *courier*, *herald*, *summons*, etc.

Of these analogies, Shakespeare makes an important use in giving additional compactness and unity to his play. As a painter of life, he necessarily delineates crimes and vices. His whole drama is but a representation of human error.

Still, error is temporary, exceptional, and self-destructive, while all that is permanent and substantial is found in truth and goodness, on which rests the moral government of the world. These are the eternal principles which sustain and carry forward the human race, and though at times they seem overborne by evil, they recede only to gather strength for a new advance. And so perfect is the reflection of life in the Shakespearian mirror, that the moral power that carries forward the action of his pieces is always found to be somewhat that represents the principle which in each respective play stands for the moral law and source of retributive justice. To this end, he avails himself, as he does in his diction, of all analogies that can conduce to his purpose. Thus, in "Macbeth," the rule is that of prudence or foresight. But this depends upon the ratiocinative faculty, or "*discourse*," which traces the relation of cause and effect. But *discourse*, as well as *relation*, is applicable to any communication of thought by words, and therefore equivalent to report, news, tidings, etc. And as in "Hamlet," in which man is represented in relation to God, the plot is moved forward by *chance* and *accident*, which are but the workings of God's providence; so in "Macbeth," which represents man with respect to a system of relations, the agency that determines the action of the respective characters is that of reports, intelligence, news, etc.

It is the report of the "bleeding soldier," that

first announces to Duncan the victory obtained by Macbeth over the rebel Macdonwald; another report by Ross, informing him of the discomfiture of Norway, and his ally, the Thane of Cawdor, leads Duncan to invest Macbeth with the titles of the traitorous thane; this being reported to Macbeth by Ross, confirms his faith in the "intelligence" of the Weird Sisters and suggests the murder of Duncan; a letter to Lady Macbeth informs her of the prediction that he shall be king, and the tidings brought almost immediately after that Duncan will pass the night in her castle, inspires her with the resolve to accomplish the murder at all hazards.

In the subsequent events of the drama, the influence of reports is equally marked. Thus, the report of the murderer to Macbeth that Banquo's throat was cut and his body lying "deep in a ditch with *twenty trenched gashes* on his head," is the cause of the vision of the murdered man, "with *twenty mortal murthers on his crown*," rising in Macbeth's imagination at the banquet, and leads to his self-betrayal; this, in turn, impels him to take counsel of the Weird Sisters, who, by warning against Macduff, corroborate the suspicions which had been aroused in him by the report of the "cloudy messenger" that Macduff "denied his person at his great bidding." This distrust is further confirmed by the couriers that "bring him word" that Macduff had fled to England; infuriated that his victim had escaped

him, he orders the slaughter of Macduff's wife and children, a report of which being carried to Macduff, inflames him with unrelenting vengeance; and, to pass by other instances, the report of the messenger that Birnam wood was moving towards Dunsinane, induces Macbeth to abandon his castle, — on the strength of which he had relied to wear out his enemies, — and betake himself to the open field, where he falls a destined prey to the sword of Macduff.

These *minutiæ* are, perhaps, not worth attention, except as proofs of the amazing skill with which Shakespeare gives unity and coherency, as well as philosophical exactness, to his dramatic pictures.

But this influence of reports and tidings, that marks so conspicuously the action of the piece, has a deeper significance. The rule of prudence or rational self-love teaches that private good is best subserved by promoting the public weal; and this is ratified by the precepts of Christianity, the comprehensive principle of which is love and charity to all men. Religion is the true rule of government and the corner-stone of the State. It is, therefore, the basis on which the whole tragedy rests, and infuses into the diction such terms and phrases as *angel*, *cherubim*, *the Lord*, *Christendom*, *life to come*, *eternal jewel of my soul*, *common enemy of man*, *the devil*, *Beelzebub*, *Golgotha*, and others, associated with Christian theology. Among these is "*gospelled*," and, in fact, the Gospel (good-speech), answering to Evangel (glad tidings), may

stand for Christian tenets. It is the injunctions of the Gospel, no less than of the *discourse of reason*, that are violated by Macbeth. And as the plot is moved forward by reports and messages, so, also, it is from the influence of the Gospel, or Divine Message, that retribution proceeds. The tyranny of Macbeth is overthrown by the power of holy Edward, the Confessor, whose hospitality shelters the rightful heir to the throne, and whose miraculous gift of healing is typical of God's grace and beneficence, and of the interposition of spiritual agencies in human affairs: —

"*Malcolm.* Comes the king forth, I *pray* you?
Doctor. Aye, sir; there are a *crew* of *wretched* souls
That *stay* his *cure:* their *malady convinces*
The great assay of art; but at his *touch* —
Such *sanctity* hath *Heaven* given his hand —
They presently *amend.*
Mal. I *thank* you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*
Macduff. What's the *disease* he means?
Mal. 'Tis *call'd* the *evil:*
A most *miraculous work* in this *good* king,
Which, often, since my here *remain* in England,
I have seen him do. How he *solicits Heaven*
Himself best knows; but *strangely-visited people*
All *swoln* and *ulcerous, pitiful* to the eye,
The mere *despair* of *surgery*, he *cures;*
Hanging a golden *stamp* about their necks,
Put on with *holy prayers;* and, *'tis spoken,*
To the *succeeding royalty* he *leaves*
The *healing benediction.* With this *strange virtue*
He hath a *heavenly gift* of *prophecy,*
And *sundry blessings* hang about his throne
That speak him *full* of grace."

Ulrici notes the fact that "Macbeth" is the play in which Shakespeare most distinctly displays his Christian sentiments and his Christian view of things. This is true, but not for the reason which the German critic supposes. It was not because Shakespeare was himself a Christian, or that he habitually took a Christian view of things, that religious sentiments are made to pervade this play; but because religion, both philosophically and historically, was a necessary element in the organization of the state of man as well as of the political State, and more particularly of the feudal State here represented; and had he been the most irreligious of men (which it would be presumption in the wisest to assert), he would no doubt, as an artist, have drawn the picture in essentially the same way.

The State culminates in the monarch, whose "great office" it is, as the fountain of order and dignity, to repress all insubordination and reward all service. Thus Duncan, the king, condemns to death "the traitorous Cawdor," and transfers his titles and estates to Macbeth as a reward for his "kingdom's great defense." So, too, as the representative of the stability of the State, he settles the succession of the crown upon his son Malcolm.

> "*Sons, kinsmen, thanes,*
> And you whose *places* are the *nearest*, know,
> We will *establish* our *estate* upon
> Our eldest Malcolm; whom we name hereafter

> The Prince of Cumberland, which *honor* must
> Not *unaccompanied* invest him only,
> But signs of *nobleness*, like stars, shall shine
> On all *deservers*."

But in the very moment when a wise foresight is thus providing for the peace and security of the kingdom, "the black and deep desires" of Macbeth's heart are urging him to the commission of a crime that will disjoint the whole framework of society, and in the end so disorganize the State as to bring it to the verge of dissolution. This crime is the murder of the monarch, who, suspecting no treachery on the part of his "peerless kinsman," has trusted his person within the walls of Macbeth's castle. But the blow that strikes Duncan to the heart, is also a deadly stab at the life of the State. It is the most execrable crime that man can commit; it is treason against the crown; it is the murder of a kinsman and a guest; it is revolt against God, man, and nature. So horrible an infringement of the law of love, on which is based the order of the world, as well as the harmony of society, sets all nature ajar. The same ministers of evil and confusion, which, in this highly imaginative and poetical picture of the State, are the supposed instigators of Macbeth's deed, also stir up in nature all the elements of insubordination and discord; beasts trained to gentleness and docility,

> "Turn *wild* in *nature* . . . .
> *Contending* against obedience, as they would make
> *War* with *mankind*;"

birds clamor through "the *livelong* night;" things base in nature gain ascendancy over what is noble and lofty; —

> "The falcon, *towering* in her *pride* of *place*,
> Is by a mousing owl hawk'd at and *kill'd*;"

wind and tempest, in their fury, sympathize with this overthrow of order; even the earth grows feverous and does shake; while the minds of men are filled with fear, and their imaginations with horror.

> "*Confusion* now hath made his *master-piece*."

Macbeth usurps the sovereignty, but fails to discharge its duties. He grasps the external form of power, but the true relations between the crown and the people, the watchful guardianship of the one and the love and homage of the other, — these he cannot secure. The very means he has taken to gain power render him unfit to rule. From the moment he strikes the fatal blow, he is unmanned and overwhelmed by a coward fear, the opposite of that valor and manhood which is the first of virtues. So far from establishing the tranquillity of the State, the power of the crown becomes, in his hands, the chief source of disorder. Driven desperate by guilty suspicions, he multiplies murders and spreads dismay in an ever-widening circle, until all classes are affected. A selfish fear usurps the place of love, and acts with dispersive force on all the elements of society. All social feeling is destroyed; the closest

ties are severed ; men fly their wives and children without leave-taking ; the thanes fly the king ; — "all is the fear and nothing is the love," — and to such a pitch does selfishness rise, that the direst distresses awaken not the slightest sympathy.

> "Alas, *poor country*,
> Almost *afraid* to *know itself:* where nothing
> But who knows nothing, is once seen to *smile ;*
> Where *sighs*, and *groans*, and *shrieks* that *rend* the air
> Are made, not mark'd ; where *violent sorrow*
> Seems a *modern ecstasy :* the *dead man's knell*
> Is there scarce ask'd for whom ; and *good men's lives*
> *Expire* before the flowers in their caps,
> *Dying* or ere they *sicken*."

And thus the State falls to pieces for want of cohesion between its parts ; at which point, the scattered elements of order and conservatism, rallying under the influence of common fears and common wrongs, recombine to overthrow the tyrant, and reinstate the reign of justice and order.

But, however great the turmoil in nature or the State, the disorder in the murderer's own mind is commensurate. But, in order to see this more clearly, it is necessary to trace, if possible, the ground-plan of Macbeth's character.

Macbeth is the representative of man in relation to society, that is, to man. The perfect social man is one in whom both self-love (or a regard for private good) and benevolence (or a regard for the good of others) are so regulated by reason that he neither falls into selfishness on the one hand, nor into a weak facility or credulous

trust on the other, but attains his own happiness and promotes that of others by an even-handed performance of his duties in both kinds. In a sound mind, these twofold duties are coincident; but in Macbeth, this unity, or balance, is destroyed by the preponderance of self-love.

A perfect manhood necessarily implies the development, in full health and strength, of all the faculties and powers appurtenant to man's estate; and as Shakespeare always illustrates his ideas by negative instances, — thus teaching the truth by pointing out the consequences of error, — we may expect to find in the leading character of this play a type of manhood which, great and imposing in many respects, yet through defect in some essential particulars, falls into errors which prove its hollowness and end in its ruin. Such is Macbeth, who, to great strength of body, adds the noblest faculties of mind, but in whom religious principle is so imperfectly developed that he lacks the moral strength which can alone raise man to his proper dignity, and set the seal of a genuine manhood on his character. The essence of religion is the submission of the will to the will of God, and an humble dependence on Heaven for the attainment of happiness; but Macbeth is utterly self-willed and self-reliant; he neither cares nor prays for Heaven's grace, but, in the pride of manhood, trusts solely to his own might and the energy of his own will to secure his peace, safety, and well-being.

The main constituent principles of this very complex character are those primary ones that enter into every classification of human faculties, however general, and into all our conceptions of human nature, however vague: these are reason, imagination, fancy, and, by implication, memory, and understanding; also will, desire, the social and domestic affections, and self-love with its concomitants, hope and fear. All these, with the exception of the affections, exist in Macbeth in full force. Self-love, which, as a universal principle, the earliest in its development and the most incessant in its action throughout life, may, perhaps, be considered the ground of man's nature, is carried in Macbeth to its highest degree, yet is held in check and prevented from becoming inordinate in its action by a powerful reason, which clearly discerns that, through a moral necessity, happiness and safety can be found only in the performance of duty, and that punishment and misery are the inevitable consequences of guilt. Prudence or foresight is, therefore, a prominent quality of his nature, and throws a veil of virtue over his character.

But strong as is the influence of prudence over Macbeth, it has no superfluous force, for his desires are equally strong; and in the struggle between his foresight, that places clearly before his mind the consequences of guilt, and his criminal desires that promise him happiness, there is brought into play an imagination of such extraor-

dinary power that, when highly excited, it renders the images of his mind apparently visible to his outward sense. And with this faculty is coupled an activity of fancy that clothes his ordinary discourse in redundant metaphor and imagery. In addition to this vivid imagination and glowing fancy, he possesses a nervous organization as fine-strung and delicate as that of a woman; and from the combination results a temperament so sensitive that, as he himself tells us, —

> "His senses will cool
> To hear a *night-shriek;* and his fell of hair
> Will at a *dismal treatise rouse*, and *stir*
> As *life* were in't."

This sensibility is no evidence, however, of genuine humanity or benevolence of heart; it may, and often does, as in his case, coexist with a latent cruelty and treachery of nature, which, like seeds of evil, lie buried and dormant under an apparently sympathetic and social disposition, but which grow rapidly into maturity when self-love is allowed to become inordinate. To Macbeth, a murder is more dreadful in imagination than in reality; present fears are less to him than horrible imaginings. This susceptibility, moreover, though it does not increase his kindness of heart, nor even imply the possession of it, greatly augments his vanity and ambition, — passions which, when moderated by reason, are social in their tendencies and conducive to the public good. Under their influence, his address, manners, and

language are refined and courteous; and, while keenly alive to the approbation of society, he also dreads infamy more than death. A sense of superior manhood fills him with high aspirations. To win glory and renown, to be honored by the prince and applauded by the people, to be "high-placed Macbeth," — these are the objects which excite his deepest desires and constitute for him the happiness and "ornament of life." So long as his ambitious aspirations are held in check by his prudence, his conduct is admirable. Though, intrinsically, he is neither humane nor true-hearted, his love of esteem and popularity renders him loyal, dutiful, courteous, genial, and kind; and though not constitutionally heroic, yet being endowed with an imperious will and great physical strength, he is capable, through pride of manhood and love of honor, of resolves and deeds which place him foremost, in a warlike age, among heroic men. But these virtues are factitious; they are the growth of self-love, and are vanity and ambition in disguise; yet so specious are they that they deceive both others and himself; they deceive even his wife, but as they depend upon the supremacy of reason over the will, and are unsustained by the strength of religious principle, it needs but sufficient impulse to be given to self-love to overbear his prudence and develop the latent wickedness of his heart.

So artfully is this character invested at the outset with a halo of virtue and heroism, — for we

see Macbeth first with the grateful Duncan's eyes, and next we take the opinion of Lady Macbeth, who speaks of his benevolence as a countercheck to his ambition, — that we are prepossessed in his favor, and do not at once perceive how deep a duplicity lurks in his nature. We are fain to believe that the loyal hero who has fought with such desperate valor for his king and country, must be animated by some high principle, and must possess some honorable repugnance, not to say moral scruples, against the foul and treacherous murder of a kind and gracious sovereign. This *mirage* of virtue, which is given to the character, has several highly artistic effects; it elevates it and gives it a true tragic dignity, and it gains our sympathies and excites our pity for the downfall of a supposed noble being. It is not until we have gone with Macbeth through his whole career that we can adequately estimate the weakness and wickedness that lie hidden under the semblance of strength and heroism with which self-love varnishes the character.

It is obvious that the elements of character are so mixed in Macbeth as to create this duplicity, or contrariety between appearance and reality. Thus — to recapitulate — though living for society, he is not social through sympathy, but through vanity and self-esteem. He craves to be loved, not in response to his own affections, but as a refined gratification of his self-love. If he ever possessed any true benevolence of heart, any

portion of that milk of human kindness, which Lady Macbeth attributes to him, it is not observable in the struggles of his ambition. The only being he seems to love is his wife, and it is questionable whether his affection for her is entirely disinterested. As a soldier, he prides himself upon his valor, and thrusts himself boldly into the van of the battle, but his courage partakes more of resolution and force of will than of constitutional intrepidity. He does not share in the moral strength in which true manhood consists. No merely human adversary in open conflict would he turn from, but he lacks the firmness of soul which, if not inaccessible to imaginary fears, at least disregards them. To the tenets of revealed religion he alludes in a manner to imply his assent to their truth; and in times of unusual distress or danger, he refers to such truths as if he recognized in them a saving grace and health, but neither religious belief nor principle have any influence whatever upon his life or practice. In fact, he does not hesitate, in pursuit of his own good, to scoff at Christian precept, — as when inciting the rancor of the murderers against Banquo, he sneers at the rule of charity and forgiveness: —

> "Are you so *gospell'd*
> To *pray* for this *good man* and for his *issue*,
> Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave
> And *beggar'd* yours forever?"

His powerful and ratiocinative mind looks at all

things under the connection of cause and effect, and sees in the unalterable order of the world the operation of Fate; yet this very bent of mind, being modified by a strong imagination, inclines him to a superstitious faith in omens and auguries. But neither reason nor religion nor superstition can place any restraint upon his imperious and self-willed nature; when his interest seems to require it, he enters the lists against Fate itself. In short, with constituents of character which, if regulated by religious principle, had made him a hero and benefactor, Macbeth combines an immoderate self-love, which debases his great and manly qualities, and sinks him to the vulgar level of an assassin and a tyrant. In the very virtues with which a refined self-interest gilds his character, there lurk wicked desires, which, like slumbering sparks, need but the breath of temptation to be blown into flames. Stripped of its worldly prudence, his nature is capable of the blackest villainy, and is directly antagonistic in all respects to that trust in God which characterizes Banquo, and to that love and justice impersonated in the "gracious Duncan," on which rest the peace and well-being of society.

The hero first comes before us in all his pride and strength of manhood, at the head of a victorious army, having himself performed prodigies of valor in the defense of the kingdom. His very success would naturally swell his pride and awaken his ambitious aspirations. Why should

one who can so well defend, not also wear a crown? But whatever dreams of greatness may have previously floated through his imagination, the thought of grasping the sovereignty takes full possession of his mind, upon his being confronted with his own desires, as they fall, by way of prophetic greeting, from the lips of the supernatural beings who meet him by the way-side and salute him with, —

> "*All hail*, Macbeth! *hail* to thee, thane of Cawdor!
> *All hail*, Macbeth, that *shalt be king hereafter.*"

These oracular words, which give voice to the inward whisperings of his own aspirations, put to the touch his spurious virtues, and they at once show their base alloy. The self-love which, under the form of vanity and a desire of distinction, had led him to great achievements for the public good, now that it is prompted by the prospect of a crown, degenerates into a selfishness that is ready for the blackest crimes. No sooner is his faith confirmed in the prediction by the announcement that he is made thane of Cawdor, than the murder of Duncan rushes into his imagination and affrights him with a revelation of the wickedness of his own nature. The current of his thoughts is set forth in the following lines, which are a good example of the method that shapes the metaphor, diction, and style of the play. They exhibit Macbeth's ratiocinative cast of mind as well as the power of his imagination, while in the equivocal or self-contradictory form

of the argument, and in a large proportion of the diction, may be detected the influence of the organic idea: —

"This supernatural *soliciting*
Cannot be *ill*, cannot be *good:* if *ill*,
Why hath it given me *earnest* of *success*
Commencing in a *truth?* I am thane of Cawdor;
If *good*, why do I *yield* to that *suggestion*
Whose *horrid image* doth *unfix* my hair
And make my *seated* heart *knock* at my ribs
Against the *use* of *nature?* Present *fears*
Are less than *horrible imaginings.*
My thought, whose *murther* yet is but *fantastical*,
Shakes so my *single state of man*, that *function*
Is *smother'd* in *surmise*, and *nothing is*
But what is not."

In delineating this character from Scottish history, the dramatist takes a hint from prevalent Highland superstitions, which makes this vision of murder that "rushes red" on the sight of Macbeth, as true in local coloring as it is to the philosophy of the mind. The circumspection, conspicuous in the subordinate characters, is also a national trait; still, as the tragedy of "Macbeth" illustrates the philosophy of man as man, that is, as an organism or State, having for its end life, health, and happiness, the play has a universal application; and the touches of local costume and coloring pertain only to the story or poetry, and not to the philosophy of the piece.

Macbeth's selfishness knows no check save his own prudential fears. Considerations of expe-

diency alone have weight with him. Untouched by the favor and affection of his king, who, with a heart overflowing with love, has placed himself, a confiding guest, beneath his roof, he argues his murder on grounds of expediency alone, and weighs in his own mind, without throwing one particle of sentiment or principle into the scale, how far the atrocity of the act, growing out of the peculiar circumstances of the case, will be likely to excite sympathy for his victim, and thus endanger his own safety. The struggle between his prudence and his ambition is developed in a soliloquy, which brings out the leading traits in his moral and mental constitution.

In the first lines, his foresight and clear perception of relations are emphatically expressed : —

> " If it were *done* when 'tis done, then 'twere *well*
> It were done quickly. If the *assassination*
> Could *trammel up* the *consequence*, and *catch*
> With his *surcease success ;* that but this *blow*
> Might be the *be-all* and the *end-all* here,
> But here, — upon this bank and shoal of time, —
> We'd jump *the life to come.* But in these cases,
> We still have *judgment* here ; that we but teach
> *Bloody* instructions, which being taught, *return*
> To *plague* the inventor. This even-handed justice
> *Commends* the ingredients of our *poison'd* chalice
> To our own lips."

In this passage there is no allusion to moral or religious scruples except in the disclaimer that the speaker is governed by them. He will " jump the life to come." The lines are the specula-

tions of a fatalist, whose reason, seeing all things chained up in cause and effect, forecasts the consequences of a crime, not as involving guilt against Heaven (a point expressly waived), but as entailing punishment at the hands of man; and he argues against the act, not because it is a wrong in itself, but because the fixed relations between crime and punishment render the latter certain. The consequences are considered as in nowise affecting others, but solely as affecting himself. He next passes in review the relations that exist between him and his destined victim: —

> "He's here in *double trust:*
> First, as I am his *kinsman* and his *subject*,
> *Strong* both against the *deed;* then, as his *host*,
> Who should against his *murtherer shut* the door,
> Not bear the knife myself."

This clearly implies his sense of the flagitiousness of the act; but he expresses no abhorrence at a crime so black as the violation of these close and sacred ties; he scans them only to calculate their effect in enhancing his danger in case he carries his guilty purpose into execution. This appears by the next lines, in which he adverts to Duncan's relations to others, and sees in the virtues of the monarch additional reasons why execration will be heaped upon his murderer: —

> "*Besides*, this Duncan
> Hath borne his *faculties* so *meek*, hath been
> So clear in his *great office*, that his *virtues*
> Will plead like *angels*, trumpet-tongu'd, against
> The deep *damnation* of his *taking-off*."

These causes for apprehension, growing out of the strong and numerous relations which cannot be infringed without incurring the penalties both of human and divine law, kindle his imagination, — the faculty that gives shape and circumstance to the contingencies of the future, — which at once starts off in a characteristically extravagant flight that has been considered as the recoil of his virtue and humanity, but which, though tinged with religious imagery, is in fact but an instance of its inordinate action when stimulated by either prudential or guilty fear : —

> " And *pity*, like a *naked new-born babe*,
> Striding the blast, or *heaven's cherubim*, hors'd
> Upon the *sightless couriers* of the air,
> Shall blow the *horrid deed* in every eye,
> That tears shall *drown* the wind."

This last consideration — the certain exposure of the act and the universal pity and execration it will occasion — is an overwhelming one. He sees that his own safety is necessarily compromised by the attempt upon the life of the monarch, and his forecast inspires a conviction that loyalty is the safer policy. His vanity and love of popularity, also, aid him in forming a virtuous resolution ; and to Lady Macbeth, who just then encounters him, he announces his determination :

> " We will *proceed* no further in this *business ;*
> He hath *honour'd* me of late, and I have *bought*
> Golden *opinions* from all *sorts* of *people*,
> Which would be *worn* now in their *newest* gloss,
> Not cast aside so soon."

But the prudence, or self-interest, that had repelled him from the deed, proves too weak a virtue to stand against the taunts upon his manhood which she uses to impel him to it; still, even she fails to break entirely down his caution, until she suggests an expedient that will throw the guilt upon the grooms of the chamber, when for the first time seeing his way clear to escape the consequences of the crime, he "bends up each *corporal agent* to the *terrible feat*." The mistake they both make is in supposing that the murder pertains solely to the world of sense; that its consequences are merely physical, and have no relation to the moral or invisible world; and that in hiding the outward evidences of their guilt they escape its inevitable reaction in their own minds.

Of remorse, and terrors of conscience, properly speaking, Macbeth exhibits no sign;[1] for remorse

[1] The same view is taken in an able analysis of Macbeth in the *Westminster Review*, 1843; though the writer of that article does not seem to have perceived that Macbeth is depicted without conscience because he is the representative of man in relation to the State, the laws of which concern only *actions* and their *consequences*, not the *motives* of the agent; and that in analogy with this, and in order to deepen the unity of effect of his play, Shakespeare adopts as the fundamental principle of human conduct, Self-love and the calculations of Prudence, on which is founded that system of morality that denies the authority of conscience as a rule of life. But this system runs up into religion, which is the highest prudence or wisdom; so that moral judgments are ultimately referred to the will of God, who out of his grace to man, has revealed the supreme rule, thus superseding conscience or private judgment by the authority of the Church. Religion, not Morality (except as included in religion), is the moral ground of "Macbeth."

implies sorrow for the crime and pity for its victim, and conscience, — at least in the Christian acceptation of the word, — implies a sense of accountability to God and a fear of divine retribution in the future life. Of this religious conscience, neither Macbeth nor his wife show any trace. At no time does he evince the slightest commiseration for the victims of his guilt, or the least show of contrition for the heinous crimes he perpetrates. That he stands in danger of divine wrath for the load of blood he has laid upon his soul, gives him no concern; it is the reprisals of man upon his bodily life and personal safety alone that he dreads. Not Christian conscience or dread of God's judgment, but *consciousness*, self-knowledge (the primary meaning of the word), united with forecasting reason, it is that fills him with terror, by inspiring him with the conviction that the consequences of his deeds must, through the inevitable working of cause and effect, prove fatal to himself, — a source of fear that is vastly magnified by his lawless imagination. His foresight, whose warnings, had he but heeded them, would have insured his safety and happiness, becomes his misery and his curse. It finds voice in his imagination, which cries audibly in his ear, "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and *therefore* Macbeth shall sleep no more." The great law of retribution that is recognized in the popular belief that "blood will have blood," is indelibly stamped upon his mind; and though he is en-

couraged by the vaticinations of the Witches, yet the effect of these is only to swell his hopes with a sense of false security, and thus render the struggle with his fears more powerful, and the distraction of his soul more terrible. The Witches develop Macbeth's self-love to the utmost. They are instruments of foreknowledge, but it is the delusive foreknowledge of imagination, that constructs the future out of the desires of the heart and the promises of hope; and differs totally from the prescience of reason that is grounded on the fixed, though invisible, sequence of moral cause and effect. The Witches, beside their æsthetic value in lifting this tragedy of horror out of the world of reality into the realm of imagination, are dramatic expedients to give colossal proportions to that struggle between hope and fear in the mind of Macbeth, that takes place, on a smaller scale, in the case of every man of foresight and strong passions, who allows his desires in the pursuit of fancied happiness to overbear the counsels of his reason.

Macbeth's emotion and language immediately after the murder of Duncan are generally pointed to as proofs of the tenderness of his conscience; and the apparent contrition which overwhelms him is always contrasted, to his advantage, with the coolness and indifference of his wife. If this scene, however, is looked at a little closely, it furnishes evidence that Macbeth does not suffer from conscience (in its religious sense) at all, nor from

any remorse for the cruelty of the deed he had perpetrated. If it may be permitted to take a technical distinction from the theology of Roman Catholic divines (and this is a Catholic play, as *Hamlet*, on the other hand, notwithstanding its Ghost and its Purgatory, is filled with the spirit of free inquiry and Protestantism), Macbeth suffers not from contrition, but rather from *attrition*, that is, grief for sin arising only from fear; and with this further difference, that in his case it is fear of punishment from man and not from God, that agitates him. It should be observed that, although he screws his courage to the sticking-place, he never conquers the nervous trepidation which the contemplated deed inspires in him. After he enters the apartments of the king in order to assassinate him, his want of self-possession is manifested by his crying aloud at hearing some noise — created, no doubt, by his fear-excited fancy, "Who's there? what, ho!" — evidently exposing himself to detection, and leading Lady Macbeth, who is listening, to suppose that the attendants of the king had awaked, and that the attempt was discovered. No sooner does he do the murder, than he is panic-struck at his own hardihood. All his fears of the consequences, which had caused him to hesitate so long, now rush back upon him with redoubled force, and stimulate his imagination to such an extent that he fancies he hears a voice, even at the moment, alarming the house with a cry, —

" ' *Sleep* no more !
Macbeth doth *murder sleep ;* ' the *innocent sleep*,
Sleep, that *knits* up the ravell'd sleave of *care*,
The *death* of each day's *life, sore labor's bath*,
Balm of *hurt* minds, *great nature's second course*,
Chief nourisher in *life's feast.*
Still it cried, ' *Sleep* no more ! ' to all the house :
' Glamis hath *murder'd sleep*, and, therefore, Cawdor
Shall *sleep* no more, Macbeth shall *sleep* no more.' "

This has been called the voice of conscience ; it unquestionably is the voice of conscious guilt ; but the point is, does it imply any penitence for the deed, any sting of the moral sense, or is it only an agony of fear, a selfish apprehension of consequences to himself, which, if removed, would leave him entirely indifferent to what others may have suffered from his acts, or what he himself may suffer in the world to come ? It will, of course, be conceded that this voice — the creation of Macbeth's own fancy — speaks both the thoughts which predominate in his mind and the feelings which dictate those thoughts. Now, making all due allowance for the elevation of style proper to highest tragedy, and making, furthermore, special allowance for Macbeth's habitually figurative mode of speech ; and admitting also, that the language implies a full consciousness of the treachery, cruelty, and cowardice of a murder upon a sleeping guest, — and in this respect it is a deep wound to his manhood, — still the passage seems expressive of nothing more than a keen anticipation, now intensified by fear,

of the working of that even-handed justice, which, before the deed, would, but for the instigations of his wife, have stayed his hand. It is remarkable that his mind does not dwell upon the essential guilt of the act, which consists in his having taken the life of a fellow-being, the atrocity of which is enhanced by the numerous natural and social ties existing between him and his victim; but he has no thought for the kind old king, who loved him and delighted to honor him; on the contrary, his fancy, seizing on the accidental circumstance that Duncan was asleep when he received the fatal blow, is at once engrossed with this physiological fact, and revels in metaphors, enumerating the benefits of sleep and its curative powers, as if the destroying of these constituted the gravamen of his crime. It cannot be contended that "sleep" here is put by metonymy for the sleeping man; for what have the sanative properties of sleep — "balm of hurt minds, sore labor's bath" — to do with the royal Duncan, who had sought his bed, "shut up in *measureless content*," and whom he now has robbed of life and sent to his dread account? What then is this overflow of metaphor and imagery, this fanciful synonymy, but an affected exaggeration of guilt, and the hypocrisy of a remorseless and cold-blooded selfishness, which, affrighted by its deed and conscious of its danger, imitates unwittingly the language of contrition, and hopes by self-accusation, to disarm resentment; yet, by seizing

on a false point, shows how hollow and unreal its penitence is? As an utterance of remorse, it is artificial and akin to those elaborate fine sentiments which thoroughly worldly and heartless men contrive to express under circumstances which they think require a display of feeling. "To show an unfelt sorrow, is an office, which the false man does easy." In the depths of their selfishness, men are quite as often hypocrites to themselves as they are to others. And a noteworthy instance of this is found in the affectation and artifice of the antithesis which Macbeth effects by a division of his titles, as if, having committed the offense in one character, he should be punished in another: —

> "*Glamis* hath murder'd sleep, and, therefore, *Cawdor*
> Shall sleep no more, *Macbeth* shall sleep no more."

This is too nicely balanced for the language of unmitigated horror, or of a distempered fancy, or a terrified conscience. It is the hypocrisy his selfishness practices towards his own foresight; like the candor of a criminal who pleads "guilty" in hope of the mercy of the judge. It shows, too, that his eye is fixed on the future, not on the past, and that his concern is exclusively for himself. How unlike the despairing reminiscences of the past, and the sobs of agony that break from Lady Macbeth in her dream: "The thane of Fife had a wife — where is she now?" "Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh!

oh! oh!" This is the language of remorse,— not of conscience, however, but of sensibility.

Macbeth's fears in Banquo stick deep. The same prophecy that had given the crown to him, had also awarded the succession to Banquo's issue. For them, then, he had —

> "*Fil'd his mind,*
> Put rancors in the vessel of his *peace*
> Only for them, and his *eternal jewel*
> Given to the *common enemy of man.*"

Here is a distinct recognition by Macbeth of his being reprobate from God, and of his having, by his crimes, consigned his soul to eternal perdition; yet the reflection awakens no terror or even anxiety of conscience; it only exasperates his selfish nature, and renders his will more wicked, imperious, and self-reliant. That the promises of the Weird Sisters had been fulfilled in his own case was conclusive that their predictions would be verified in favor of Banquo's issue, yet, rather than so, he exclaims, "Come, Fate, into the list, and champion me to the utterance!" Still it is not so much envy of Banquo's posterity that induces him to waylay and assassinate his friend; it is rather his dread of Banquo himself, before whose moral strength and dauntless temper his own genius is rebuked. What should hinder that daring soldier from catching the nearest way with him, even as he had done with Duncan? Cawdor, "*a prosperous gentleman,*" whose life had been forfeit to his treason, showed how

easy it is to die when a deep penitence has robbed death of its terrors; and now Macbeth, whose valor had won the title and estates of the traitorous thane, shows us what dastardly fears a brave man can suffer who has emasculated his nature with guilt. By the murder of Duncan he had thought to be "so much more *the man*," but instead of exalting his manhood and securing his happiness, he loses his moral, and even his physical health and strength, and delivers himself over to intolerable torture. For these disorders he looks for relief to the murder of Fleance and Banquo: —

> "Let the *frame of things disjoint*, both the worlds *suffer*,
> Ere we will *eat* our *meal* in *fear*, or *sleep*
> In the *affliction* of these *terrible dreams*
> That *shake* us nightly. Better be with the *dead*
> Whom we, to *gain our peace*, have *sent* to *peace*,
> Than on the *torture* of the mind to lie
> In *restless ecstasy*."

Without pity or penitence, or fear of God, but dreading the vengeance of man, he relies for safety on the energy of evil; and adopting as a maxim of expediency, that —

> "Things *bad* begun make *strong* themselves by *ill*,"

he strives to quell his fears by secret murder or open slaughter of all who arouse his suspicions. Prudence, now no longer his guardian angel, is the fury that urges him to crime. But the more deeply he wades into blood, the more distant is his prospect of safety. He can neither stop nor

go back, but is driven onward by the consequences of his own deeds: —

> "I am in *blood*
> Stept in so far, that should I wade no more,
> *Returning* were as *tedious* as go o'er."

He seeks to hide his guilt under shows of love and hospitality, but his duplicity is baffled by his uncontrollable imagination, which shakes his manhood with visions of his murdered victims; his royal banquets, given to conciliate and lull suspicion, break up, through his own distempered conduct, in "most admired disorder." Every passing breeze inspires a new alarm. Distrusting all, hated by all, and isolated by his wickedness, he is so unrelated to anything human or good, that he turns for succor to the powers of hell. Intent only on his own safety, he is determined to penetrate that future which enfolds for him so many terrors. "For *his own good*, all causes shall give way." With a sublime and impious selfishness, he conjures "the spirits that know all *mortal consequences*" to reveal to him his fate, even at the cost of all the order of nature and all the welfare of man: —

> "I conjure you, by that which you profess
> (Howe'er you come to know it), *answer* me.
> Though you *untie* the winds and let them *fight*
> Against the *churches;* though the yesty waves
> *Confound* and swallow navigation up;
> Though bladed corn be *lodg'd* and trees *blown down;*
> Though *castles topple* on their *warders'* heads;
> Though *palaces* and *pyramids* do *slope*

Their heads to their *foundations;* though the *treasure*
Of *nature's germens tumble* all together,
Even till *destruction sicken, answer* me
To what I ask you."

Yet with singular self-contradiction, his desperate and distracted mind, now fast losing its power of cool and consecutive reasoning, builds its only hope of safety on the fixed and unalterable order of Nature: —

"*Apparition.* Macbeth shall never *vanquish'd* be, until
Great Birnam wood to *high* Dunsinane hill
Shall *come against* him.
Macbeth. That will never be:
Who can impress the forest? bid the tree
Unfix his *earth-bound* root? Sweet bodements! good!
Rebellion's head, *rise* never, till the wood
Of Birnam *rise;* and our *high-plac'd* Macbeth
Shall *live* the *lease* of *nature, pay* his breath
To time and *mortal* custom."

Thus the subtle fiend, with intent to drive Macbeth on —

"To spurn *fate,* scorn *death,* and *bear*
His HOPES 'bove *wisdom, grace,* and *fear,* —

utters oracles, which, by promising security on conditions apparently involving the stability of Nature, give to his imagination a ground of hope as firm as that which is held by his reason, which is the cause of his fears; so that he now rests his safety on that order of nature in the physical world which in the moral world insures his destruction. His mind is thus set in opposition to itself; his nature is disorganized, and like multi-

tudes of others, he pursues his wicked career and the gratification of his desires in the confident hope of escaping punishment, though every conviction of his reason assures him to the contrary.

Notwithstanding these supernatural assurances, therefore, his mind, racked with alternate hope and fear, can find no peace. In his very hopes, there lurks a fear, and he "will make *assurance double sure* and take a bond of Fate." Instead of prompting forbearance, his fancied security urges him to deeds of the most wanton and aggravated cruelty. He discards forethought, gives way to impulse, and acts with the greatest precipitation. And here may be noted an instance of the coherency with which this play is constructed. Immediately after the murder of Duncan is discovered, Macbeth, pretending to be infuriated, slays the sleeping grooms, to whom he attributes the crime, and accounts for the act by saying, —

> "Who can be *wise, amaz'd, temperate* and *furious*,
> *Loyal* and neutral in a moment? *No man.*
> The *expedition* of my *violent love*
> Outran the *pauser, reason.*"

This self-contradiction, which he deems impossible, and this unreflecting fury, which he affects for the purpose of hiding a premeditated murder, are now by even-handed justice brought home to him in reality, and hasten forward his end. The expedition of his violent passions outruns all deliberation, and impels him to an act, which, of all others, is best calculated to bring to pass the

fulfillment of the oracle. Hearing that Macduff has escaped his murderous designs by flight, he orders the slaughter of the defenseless wife and children of the fugitive thane. By this atrocity, he arouses an implacable spirit of revenge in the father, who, of all the sons of men, is the only one he has any reason to fear.

"*Time*, thou *anticipat'st* my *dread exploits:*
The *flighty purpose* never is o'ertook
Unless the *deed* go with it. From this moment
The very *firstlings* of my *heart* shall be
The *firstlings* of my *hand.* And even now,
To *crown* my *thoughts* with *acts*, be it *thought* and *done:*
The *castle* of Macduff I will *surprise;*
Seize upon Fife; *give to th' edge o' th' sword*
His *wife*, his *babes*, and all *unfortunate* souls
That *trace* him in his *line.* No boasting like a fool;
This *deed* I'll *do*, before this *purpose* cool."

As dangers multiply, and the consequences of his deeds press upon him, the inward conflict of his mind increases. All his faculties are in revolt.

"Some say he's *mad;* others that lesser *hate* him
Do call it *valiant fury.*"
"Now does he feel
His *secret murthers sticking* on his hands;
Now minutely *revolts upbraid* his *faith-breach,*
Those he *commands* move only in *command*,
Nothing in *love.*"
"Who then shall *blame*
His *pester'd* senses to *recoil* and *start*
When all that is within him does *condemn*
Itself for being there."

Yet this terrible picture is not unrelieved by touches of pathos. To Macbeth, whose social nature craves sympathy and shrinks from odium, the thought of the love and popularity he has lost, and of the execration he has earned, occasions the deepest despondency; and he looks back upon his life, once so happy and bright, but now blasted with guilt, with emotion profoundly sad: —

> "*Honor*, *love*, *obedience*, *troops of friends*
> He must not look to have; but, in their stead,
> *Curses*, not loud but deep, *mouth-honor*, *breath*,
> Which the *poor heart* would *fain* deny, but *dare* not."

These and similar reflections seem to reveal the ruins of a noble nature, and soften our feelings towards him. They mitigate the horror excited by his bloody deeds, and, like the grace that lends a charm to the head of the Medusa, they touch with beauty,

> "The darkness and the glare of pain,
> To humanize and harmonize the strain."

But inimitable as are the effects produced by Macbeth's melancholy retrospect of his ruined hopes and happiness, they are not obtained at the sacrifice of philosophical truth or coherency of character. His mind reverts to the past only to lament what he has lost, not repent what he has done. His self-love never deserts him. Engrossed with his own sorrows, he never by any chance wastes a moment's sympathy on the sufferings of others; and even the announcement of

the death of his wife — of her, who had dared and done and suffered all for his sake, — draws from him only a reflection, exceedingly solemn in sentiment and rich in fancy, it is true, still only a general reflection upon the emptiness of life and the vanity of human expectations.

But the coils of Fate close round him, and he becomes frantic with contradictory thoughts; now loud, vaunting, and buoyant with false confidence in the vaticinations of the Weird Women; now despondent at the desertion of his followers, and alarmed at the approach of real dangers. And when the wood of Birnam begins to move and the equivocation of the fiend becomes apparent, despairing, heart-sick, and bewildered by his lowering fate, he feels the very regularity and steadfastness of Nature hateful, and wishes to drag down in his ruin the universal frame of the organic world: —

> "I pull in *resolution*, and begin
> To *doubt* the *equivocation* of the *fiend*
> That *lies* like *truth*: 'Fear not, till Birnam wood
> Do come to Dunsinane;' and now a wood
> Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
> If this which he *avouches* does appear
> There is no *flying hence* nor *tarrying here.*
> I 'gin to be *aweary* of the sun,
> And *wish the estate of the world* were now *undone.*"

In his frenzy, he loses all prudence; and, abandoning the defenses of his castle, which were "his *main hope*," he rushes with his followers to the open field. Here his forces desert him, and he

revolves in his mind both flight and suicide; but the one is impracticable, and the other inexpedient. Thirsting for blood, he thinks it better to kill others than himself. "While I see *lives*, the *gashes do better* on them." And when finally the avenging Macduff brings him to bay, and he learns the treachery of the oracle that "none of woman born shall harm Macbeth," he quails for a moment, before his inevitable doom: —

> "*Accursed* be that tongue that tells me so
> For it hath cow'd my *better part* of *man!*
> And be these *juggling fiends* no more believ'd,
> That *palter* with us in a *double* sense;
> That keep the word of *promise* to the ear,
> But *break* it to the *hope*. I'll not *fight* with thee."

But self-love comes in to prop his sinking resolution; his pride of manhood and dread of contempt revive his pristine courage. Though Fate and fiends and auguries are against him, yet rather than yield and "be baited with the rabble's curse," he will try the last; he fights with a mad valor and dies a soldier's death.

The analogy which is maintained between the anarchy in Macbeth's nature — "his single state of man" — and the political State, is obvious. Both the individual and the nation are disorganized by fears that are utterly destructive of that sense of security, without which there can be neither peace of mind in the individual nor concord in the State.

The class of which Macbeth is a type, compre-

hends not only the great tyrants and disturbers of mankind, as well as lesser criminals, who hope to achieve happiness by guilt; but also many others, who, possessing the same elements of character, are without his criminality; for instance, the whole tribe of visionaries and speculators, who build their hopes of success on the promises of imagination instead of the sober deductions of prudence and reason.

In contrast with the wildness and fury of Macbeth, and his desperate reliance upon self-will, stand the caution and foresight of Malcolm and his followers. They represent the order and conservatism of society. Trusting nothing to hope, and taking no counsel of imagination, they look for success solely to their prudence and their valor: —

> "*Macduff.* Let our *just censures*
> Attend the *true event*, and put we on
> *Industrious soldiership.*
> *Siward.* The time *approaches*
> That will with *due decision* make us know
> What we shall say we have and what we owe.
> *Thoughts speculative* their *unsure hopes relate*,
> But *certain issue strokes* must *arbitrate:*
> Towards which *advance* the *war.*"

The principles represented by Malcolm and his coadjutors receive their fullest exposition in old Siward: —

> "An older and a *better soldier* none
> That *Christendom* gives out."

He is a type of loyalty, manhood, and pious

resignation. His sense of duty predominates over his paternal feelings; and he has no tear for the death of his brave son so long as he is assured that he died manfully in the discharge of his duty:

"*Rosse.* Your son, my lord, has *paid* a *soldier's debt:*
He only *liv'd* but till he was a *man;*
The which no sooner had his *prowess confirm'd*
In the *unshrinking station* where he *fought,*
But like *a man* he *died.*
Siward. Then he is *dead?*
Rosse. Aye, and brought off the field. Your cause of *sorrow*
Must not be *measur'd* by his *worth,* for then
It hath no end.
Siw. Had he his *hurts* before?
Rosse. Aye, in the front.
Siw. Why, then, *God's soldier* be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not *wish* them to a fairer *death*
And so, his *knell* is *knoll'd.*
Malcolm. He's *worth* more *sorrow,*
And that I'll *spend* for him.
Siw. He's *worth* no more;
They say he parted well, and *paid* his *score:*
And so, *God be with him!*"

The character of Lady Macbeth is so drawn as to contain a duplicity or equivocalness, similar in kind though contrary in effect, to that found in her husband's; her apparent motives are in direct contradiction to her real nature. It has been pointed out that in Macbeth self-love wears the semblance of public spirit and devotion to his king and country; whereas in her case good-will,

in its intensest form, that is, conjugal love and a desire for the happiness of her husband, takes the guise of innate cruelty. Through a regard for his own private good, he exposes his life in fierce conflict with public enemies; through a regard for the good of another, she presses forward to the murder of a friend and benefactor.

Lady Macbeth shares her husband's ambition, without sharing his foresight or his fears; and having, if possible, less of moral or religious principle, and more of fatalism than her husband, and being endowed, moreover, with an inflexible will, she pursues the objects of her guilty ambition with an intensity of purpose that causes her wickedness to stand out in bold relief, unmitigated by the warnings of prudence, the pleadings of humanity, or any redeeming feature whatever. She is, in some respects, the moral complement of her husband. She excels in those qualities in which he is most deficient; being as firm as he is wavering, as single-minded as he is doubtful, as rash as he is circumspect, as generous as he is selfish, as proud as he is vain, as intense in feeling as he is cold in heart, as regardless of popularity as he is eager to acquire it. Though highly imaginative, — as witness her invocation to the spirits of murther, — she has none of that extreme excitability of imagination, which, at times, gives to the phantoms of his mind a visible and almost palpable reality; on the contrary, all her faculties are subservient to her domineering will, which,

occasionally, coerces her imagination to look upon realities as illusions. Proud and lofty by nature, she enters, heart and soul, into his ambitious projects; and in this her self-love and her affection as a wife happily concur. Her good-will towards others may not extend further than her husband, but within this limit, it is supreme. An intense sympathy with him governs all her conduct, and she seeks her own happiness only by endeavoring to promote his. So far as he is concerned, she fulfills the perfect law of duty; she errs only as to her means; and under the double influence of her own love of greatness and a desire for her husband's happiness, her ambition and her wickedness become alike inordinate. Like most wives she thinks that she truly reads her husband's character; and like most wives she is blinded by her affection to his greatest faults. He is so much worse than she can possibly conceive him to be, or than he conceives himself to be, that his misgivings about seizing the crown, which are but a prudent regard for his own safety, are attributed by her to a humane disposition. She sees him in the light of her own higher and finer character. How could she have loved him had she been able to read him aright? Fearless herself, and knowing him to be a brave soldier, she refers his repugnance to catching the nearest way to those compunctious visitings to which she herself is accessible. But if she mistakes in attributing to him an excess of human kindness, she

is clearly right in thinking him devoid of moral courage. Knowing his weak points, she knows to what height the prediction of the Weird Sisters will inflame his ambition ; and believing that his happiness depends upon his success, she is eager to strengthen his purpose, and —

> "Pour her spirits in his ear,
> And chastise with the *valor* of her tongue
> All that *impedes* him from the golden round
> Which *Fate* and *metaphysical aid* doth seem
> To have him *crown'd* withal."

She is impatient to do that for him which she fears he cannot do for himself. To her haughty and audacious mind, the murder of the king involves no danger, if it can be carried through with and the power usurped. "What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?" Now the prediction of the Witches has given assurance on this point, nothing more is needed than opportunity, and this immediately offers itself in Duncan's visit to her castle. The finger of Fate is clearly in it; every augury foretells success. She says, —

> "The raven himself is hoarse
> That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
> Under my battlements."

The crown is now within her grasp, and the glittering prize takes full possession of her imagination. She is transported "beyond this ignorant present, and she feels the future in the instant." To obtain the object of her desire

involves a terrible and dangerous act of assassination, but with regard to this, she neither reasons nor imagines; she wills. She is resolved that neither the horrors of a murder, nor her husband's scruples, nor her woman's weakness, shall stand in her way. And here, again, is found another point of contrast between her and her husband; for, as he has no compunction at the thought of committing a deed of blood, but recoils from its results; so, on the other hand, she is utterly reckless of the consequences of the act, but falters before its cruelty. It violates her woman's nature. She would fain unsex herself, and, with appalling wickedness, she calls upon the spirits "that tend on mortal thoughts" to supplant her feminine nature and fill her top-full of direst cruelty: —

> "Come, you spirits
> That *tend* on *mortal* thoughts, *unsex* me here,
> And *fill* me, from *the crown to th' toe, top-full*
> Of *direst cruelty!* make *thick my blood;*
> *Stop* up th' access and passage to *remorse*,
> That no *compunctious visitings* of *nature*
> *Shake* my *fell purpose*, nor keep *peace* between
> Th' effect and it. Come to my *woman's breasts*,
> And take my *milk* for *gall*, you *murd'ring ministers*,
> Wherever in your *sightless* substances
> You *wait* on *nature's mischief*," etc.

Such an invocation could not have been imagined by a woman of her will and courage, had she not felt an inward consciousness that her feminine nature, and even the physiological constitu-

tion of her sex, revolted against the execution of her "fell purpose." But her will does not relax in view of the horrors of the deed. She assumes the responsibility of the murder, arranges its details, and drives Macbeth by taunts upon his manhood up to striking the blow at the earliest moment. Throughout the business, she carries with her an air and tone of superiority both of will and wickedness. Yet all this while she is acting in his behoof, and only striving to inspire him with a moral courage to do that on which she believes his true happiness depends. The fears and scruples that shake him, find no entrance into her mind. This is partly owing to a different mental constitution, partly to the different character of her ambition. So far as she desires power, it is for the sake of power; and she exhibits pride and courage where he shows vanity and fear. It is enough for her to know that she sways the sceptre; her lofty spirit disdains the breath of the populace. Macbeth's ambition is more selfish and more vain. With him, place and power lose their charm unless his vanity is flattered by the plaudits of the people, — the echo in his ears of his own merit and superiority. He possesses more of the spirit of society, more emulation and eagerness to shine, than his sterner, purer, prouder wife.

Neither Macbeth nor his wife alone could have effected the murder of Duncan. He shrinks from the deed because he is too fearful of consequences

to hazard the crime; and she, on the other hand, though resolved to commit the crime, and actually striving to raise herself to a pitch of physical audacity that will enable her to strike the blow with her own hand, is unnerved by the aged king's resemblance to her father, and recoils from the seeming parricide. She has too much sensibility to be as wicked in act as she is in wish. Strong as is her will, her woman's nature is stronger. This division between Macbeth and his wife of the faculties necessary to accomplish their bloody intent, is conceived with great art; for, though in a moral point of view they are both equally criminal, yet the guilt is so distributed between them, as to leave to each a better side for our contemplation. Thus there is room for pity; and the assassination is prevented from becoming a mere vulgar and cold-blooded murder.

It has been observed that Macbeth is introduced to us in such a way as to win our favor; but Lady Macbeth is brought forward under circumstances that make her appear almost divested of humanity. We first see her at the moment that the prediction of Macbeth's greatness — involving to her impatient desires the murder of Duncan — has taken full possession of her mind. She stands before us, both in wish and thought, a murderess; and the desperate wickedness of spirit she displays under the high-wrought feeling of the moment, we are apt to mistake for a normal condition of her character. Yet her prayer to be

unsexed is a proof that even physiologically her woman's constitution is repugnant to the cruelty of the deed. So, too, when she attacks her husband's irresolution with imputations of cowardice, the fire she displays, and the ferocity she claims for herself, are what give the first impressions of character; and, at this time, we have no means of judging how far such feelings are simulated for the purpose of forcing her husband up to the work she herself is incapable of performing. So earnest and persistent is she in her purpose, that, when drawing again from physiology an illustration of the energy of her will, she exclaims,—

> "I have *given suck*, and know
> How *tender* 'tis to *love the babe* that *milks* me:
> I would, while it was *smiling* in my *face*,
> Have pluck'd the *nipple* from his *boneless gums*,
> And *dash'd the brains out*, had I so sworn as you
> Have done to this" —

we are tempted to think that she would be as good as her word should the contemplated contingency arise; and it is not until afterwards, when we come to see her in different relations to her husband, that we perceive that this is but "the valor of her tongue," to shame her husband out of his timidity. And significant is it also, that her vehemence even surprises Macbeth, and extorts from him that burst of admiration, — drawn also from physiology, —

> "*Bring forth men-children only!*
> For thy *undaunted* mettle should compose
> Nothing but *males*."

The murder of the king is, no doubt, to be laid at her door, inasmuch as she goads her husband into perpetrating it; but this she does, not by putting a purpose in his heart, but by infusing a courage into his *mind;* for it is by making him think that the sequence of events will not bring retribution on his head, that she breaks down his selfish fears. In all this she acts upon a previous knowledge of his character, and consults what she deems his good. Moreover, she does not dream of continuing in a course of guilt. Having once secured "solely sovereign sway and masterdom," her courageous soul feels no apprehensions either from the acts or the suspicions of others, and she takes no part in his succeeding enormities.

Her coolness in the murder-scene is adduced by some critics as a proof of her hard and cruel nature; by others, of her want of imagination. It may be doubted whether such conclusions are well founded. In this scene, the equivocation or duplicity which is wrought into the incidents and characters of the play, and which in the latter is manifested in the contrast between their apparent and real feelings and motives, is productive of the most powerful dramatic effects. Macbeth seems to suffer the most exquisite pangs of sensibility and remorse, which, in fact, are occa-

sioned by selfish fears. They overpower his will, and immoderately excite his imagination. She, on her side, exhibits an insensibility worthy of a headsman. This, were it real, would be inconsistent with other parts of her character; but it is only affected, for the purpose of calming him. This course she is able to take through the compulsory restraint her will places both on her feelings and imagination. While Macbeth is in the apartments of the king, doing the murder, she, though emboldened with wine, is nervous, anxious, and excited — as appears in her whispered soliloquy, her attention to the minutest sounds, and her fear of detection; but as soon as he reenters and she perceives his dreadful agitation, and that, to use her own high-bred phrase, "his constancy has left him unattended," she at once summons up all her nerve, represses her feelings, and compels herself to look upon the murder in all its details and accessories, as an ordinary, commonplace transaction. To his excited remarks and questions, she gives the most simple, matter-of-fact replies. She remonstrates with him for thinking "so *brainsickly* of things," and treats the whole affair with frigid indifference. It is not until she is called upon to carry out the details of the murder that she lets out the secret of her apparent want of humanity. Perceiving that, contrary to the preconcerted plan, Macbeth had, in his affright, brought away the daggers, she urges him to return and besmear the sleeping grooms

with blood; but he, the heroic soldier, who, when fighting loyally for his king, had been described as —

> "Nothing *afear'd* of what *himself did make*,
> *Strange images* of *death*,"

shrinks back in terror from looking upon the old man he had just murdered in his bed. The safety of both, however, requires that the daggers be replaced; and notwithstanding the violence she must do to her nature by imbruing her hands in blood, — as her subsequent dreams bear witness, — she undertakes and accomplishes the shocking task. But this imperturbability does not arise from cruelty of heart, nor even from constitutional courage; it proceeds from an effort of imagination, by which she shuts out of her mind the moral aspect of the act, and regards it simply as a matter of the sense, devoid of all associations either of morality or sentiment. By willfully imagining the murdered king a mere tableau, made up of so much light and shade and coloring, she divests the object before her of all its relations, and cuts off the murder from its consequences. This she does to sustain herself, and to reassure her husband by making light of that which so unmans him: —

> "The SLEEPING and the DEAD
> "*Are but as* PICTURES: 'tis the eye of *childhood*
> That *fears* a PAINTED *devil*."

And this, too, comes from a woman, from whose lips has just before fallen that touch of natural sensibility, —

"Had he not *resembled*
"My *father as he slept*, I had done 't."

But she is now endeavoring to rally her husband out of his terror, and dwells upon merely material realities. She affects to think that blood is a fluid, the stain of which has no special significance, and that all traces of their guilt can be easily effaced: —

"A *little water* clears us of this *deed;*
How easy is it then?"

But Macbeth's imagination, always excitable and unrestrained, and stimulated now by the thronging upon his mind of all the tremendous consequences of his crime, sees in his bloody hand that which all great Neptune's ocean will not wash clean; his hand, rather, will the multitudinous seas incarnadine, and make them witnesses of his guilt.

Thus, while his imagination usurps control of his will, and fills his mind with fantastic images of horror, her will coerces her imagination to look upon real horrors as fantastic.

That Lady Macbeth's *sang-froid* is assumed, that it is, in fact, a combined effort of will and imagination, and that it does not proceed from any want of susceptibility to moral impressions and the horrors of the occasion, is shown by her previous attempts to divert Macbeth's mind from such considerations: —

"*Macbeth.* I could not say *Amen*,
When they did say, *God bless us!*

Lady Macb. *Consider* it *not so deeply.*
Macb. But wherefore could I not pronounce *Amen?*
I had most need of *blessing*, and *Amen*
Stuck in my throat.
Lady Macb. These *deeds* must not be thought
After these ways; so, it *will make us mad.*"

Is not this presentiment of madness the clearest possible proof that she has a sense of something far more deeply involved in the murder than its material facts, but that she will not permit this to come up into distinct consciousness? Her subsequent remorse, too, that consumes her life, — a remorse that indicates sensibility, not religious conscience, — is another and irrefragable proof, that her indifference during the bloody and horrible scenes of the murder is but the result of her not permitting her mind to wander beyond their merely superficial aspect. This she effects by force of imagination.

The first impressions of Lady Macbeth's character, being derived from scenes in which her zeal for her husband's aggrandizement and her own ambition, give her an almost preternatural grandeur of wickedness, have led to the popular opinion that she is a stalwart virago, of whom her husband stands in mortal dread, and to whom murder and bloodshed are pleasant pastimes. So far as any supposition can be gathered from the text with regard to her personal appearance, it would seem — as has been suggested by Mrs. Siddons and others — that she had an extremely

delicate and feminine frame. "Dearest chuck," is a term of endearment which would hardly be applied by any man to an Amazon. But what may be considered, perhaps, a better reason for this supposition is, that in delineating this picture of "the state of man," which includes that of woman, the poet may be presumed to have kept before his mind an ideal of femineity as well as one of manhood; and he renders these characters exceedingly complex and dramatic by combining with the strength and stature of the hero the delicate nervous system of the woman; and with the soft and fragile form of the woman, the iron nerves of a man.

The murder of Duncan was the readiest expedient, "the nearest way," to the verification of the prediction, and Lady Macbeth drives forward with the rashness of her sex to its accomplishment. But, her husband once possessed of the crown, her conduct exhibits nothing but a woman's affection and generosity. True, she spares no sarcasms when it is necessary for his safety, — as in the banquet scene, — to shame him out of his fears, but at other times she listens to the outpourings of his morbid apprehensions in silent sorrow. She can hardly mistake the hints he gives her of his intended attempt upon the life of Banquo, although he hides, even from his own mind, the naked villainy of that piece of treachery under the most beautiful and poetical associations drawn from the peace and quietude of evening;

yet she affects ignorance of his designs, for she cannot approve, and fears to condemn; for she sees that opposition will but fan the fires that madden his mind, and drive it to turn its stings upon itself. In this reserve and reticence, as in her previous fiery incentives, a double motive is manifest: one springing from self-love, the other from affection for him. Her husband's preservation is her own safety, and in acting for his good, she consults her own; and so, as she deemed his happiness dependent upon her urging him up to taking the life of the king, now both affection and prudence induce her to abstain from every act that can add to his irritation, and thus increase the chances of his detection.

She, as well as Macbeth, finds that the coveted prize brings no satisfaction; that hopes of happiness founded on crime are illusory; and she gives herself up to a speechless grief for the past as he does to guilty terrors for the future: —

> "Nought's had, all's *spent*,
> When our *desire* is got without *content:*
> 'Tis *safer* to be that which we *destroy*
> Than by *destruction dwell* in *doubtful joy*."

Her endeavors to secure the happiness of her husband have plunged him into endless misery, and, what perhaps is equally poignant to her feelings, have revealed to her gaze the ignoble selfishness of his nature. Her guilt is too black for penitence, her grief too deep for hope; all the "life of life" is fled, and she settles down into the

darkness of despair. The innocent blood that has been so uselessly shed weighs upon her heart, until a malady both of mind and body — "a great *perturbation* of *nature*" — attests the disorganizing force of guilt. That imagination, which had allured her to crime for the attainment of happiness, and which, under the coercion of the will, had carried her through the night of the murder with such wonderful composure, now makes its influence felt as an avenger of blood. Dreams, born of terrible memories, drive her from her bed to walk in her sleep and sob despairingly over her tainted hand, which all the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweeten; and in her waking moments "thick-coming fancies" so load her mind with horror that reason gives way, and she ends her life, it is darkly hinted, by self-murder.

Thus these characters are wrought out with perfect exactness and consistency to the end. As her crimes had sprung from a different motive from his, so also does even-handed justice visit her with a different punishment. He offends — through self-love — against the foresight of his mind, which warns him back from guilt by clearly pointing out its consequences. He, therefore, is punished by apprehensions of the future, which that foresight engenders. She offends — through her affection for him — against the sensibility of her nature, which she violates by acts of cruelty, and is, consequently, punished by those compunctious visitings to which her sensibility lays her

open. In both cases, the imagination is the faculty that is instrumental in inflicting the penalty, acting, however, in him by giving fearful shape to the contingencies of the future, while in her it acts by reviving in remembrance the horrible images of the past. In both, hope is converted to despair.

"Macbeth" has been truly called the drama of *Conscience;* but the word must be taken in the sense of consciousness, or self-knowledge, and not as necessarily implying a hope of reward, or fear of punishment at the hands of God. In Macbeth and his wife are portrayed the workings of natural, not religious conscience. Bloodshed is looked upon as a violation of the law of nature and the order of the world, and not merely of the will of God, except so far as such will is implied in such law and order. And in the career and fate of Macbeth and wife, who are utterly godless and indifferent to either the promises or threats of religion, it is shown that murder, as violative of the law and constitution of man's nature, is visited through the working of such natural law by a punishment as terrible as any that an affrighted religious conscience can inflict. Therefore, in the play, though there are many allusions to nature and self-knowledge, there is not a word said of conscience.

In the subordinate characters there is a preponderance of the reasoning faculty. They all evince a ratiocinative bent, a premeditation, a prudence

or weighing of consequences, that balance the highly imaginative tone imparted to many scenes by the rhythmical incantations of the Witches, and the displays of a lawless imagination in Macbeth.

Foremost among these characters is Banquo, who, by his truth, is a foil to the treachery of Macbeth. He is best described by Macbeth himself: —

> " In his *royalty* of *nature*
> *Reigns* that which would be *fear'd:* 'tis much he *dares;*
> And, to that *dauntless temper* of his mind,
> He hath a *wisdom* that doth *guide* his *valor*
> To act in *safety.*"

Though stirred by the evil solicitings of the Witches, Banquo's mind is too steadfast to give way to guilty imaginings, except in slumber, when " wicked dreams abuse the curtain'd sleep.' From these cursed thoughts he prays to be delivered: —

> " A *heavy summons* lies like lead upon me,
> And yet I would not sleep: *merciful powers,*
> Restrain in me the *cursed thoughts* that *nature*
> *Gives* way to in *repose.*"

Religious principle — a reliance upon God — is the source of Banquo's moral strength, and gives dignity, and even sublimity, to his assertions of his own rectitude; as, when after the murder of Duncan, all is fear and suspicion, he exclaims, —

> " *Fears* and *scruples shake* us:
> In the *great hand* of *God* I *stand;* and thence
> Against the undivulg'd pretense I *fight*
> Of *treasonous malice.*"

Yet so insidious are the suggestions of ambition, that this calm and upright man indulges secret hopes for his posterity, to whom the Weird Sisters had promised the succession. These hopes prove his ruin. He had the strongest reasons for believing that Macbeth had murdered the sovereign and dispossessed the rightful heir, and ordinary prudence might have taught him that the very prediction which excited his hopes, would also excite the fears of the usurper; yet, blinded by ambition, he puts a credulous trust in Macbeth's professions of friendship, and gives in his adhesion with marked and ultra avowals of loyalty: —

> "Let your Highness
> Command upon me; to the which my *duties*
> Are with a *most indissoluble tie*
> *Forever knit.*"

This course brings him within reach of Macbeth's treachery, which speedily insures his death.

The character of Rosse, Lenox, Menteith, Caithness, and Angus, are not discriminated by any very strong touches. They all exhibit circumspection, varying in degree from prudence to fear. In Lenox, caution is well expressed by his ironical vein. They are introduced to fill up the canvas and represent a class in the State on which Macbeth's tyranny chiefly fell, and whose revolt and patriotism are necessary to his overthrow.

One of the most conspicuous of this class is Macduff, who takes rank in the foreground of the piece. Of a masculine nature, he has less cau-

tion and more outspoken disdain of falsehood and treason than the other nobles. He hardly attempts to conceal his suspicions of Macbeth's guilt, omits to attend the coronation, and refuses his presence at the tyrant's feast. This excites the usurper's distrust, and Macduff flies to England. But in this he is not animated exclusively by self-love or regard for his own safety; patriotism is, perhaps, the stronger motive. His object is to "pray the aid of the holy king" for Malcolm's restoration. During his absence, his wife and children, whom he had left unprotected, are savagely slaughtered by Macbeth. An act so inhuman could not have been anticipated by Macduff; still it overwhelms him with self-reproach, and occasions the celebrated scene in which his manly grief is so powerfully portrayed. It adds to his patriotic desire to exterminate the tyrant an implacable spirit of private revenge; and under this double motive he devotes himself to the destruction of Macbeth. Thus this character of strong manhood, which represents the most powerful and sacred of the social affections, — love of family and love of country, — becomes the instrument by which peace and order are restored to the State "suffering under a hand accursed."

In Lady Macduff, is strongly manifest the ratiocinative bent of mind that marks the group of characters that stands on the moral side of the play. She appears but in one scene, but that one extremely effective, in conveying a sense of the

fear and insecurity pervading society under the oppressive rule of Macbeth. Her sadness and sense of desertion, mingled with her maternal tenderness, render her colloquy with her boy (whose prattle has the same ratiocinative cast) very affecting, and heightens greatly the horror excited by their murder, with which the scene closes.

Observe, too, that the character of the gentlewoman who attends Lady Macbeth, is simply one of thoughtful circumspection.

The two desperadoes that Macbeth incites to the murder of Banquo, also, stand in direct relation to the organic idea. They are men broken down in fortune, who attribute their want of success in life to the injustice of society, and are, therefore, ready to violate every social law and relation.

As the State, or society, contains within itself all periods of human life from infancy to old age, and as the "state of man" is the theme of the play, there are introduced among the *dramatis personæ* characters representing the more marked stages of human existence. Infancy, of course, can only be alluded to, as it frequently is; but childhood is impersonated in "Macduff's boy," adolescence in Fleance, youthful manhood in young Siward, — "an unrough youth, who even now protests his *first of manhood*," the strength of years in Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff, and others; a more advanced age in Duncan and old

Siward, and the extreme of life in the "Old Man," who can "threescore years and ten remember well." This last character, the merest sketch, is yet brought into harmonious relation with the organic idea by being marked by benevolence, —

> "*Rosse.* *Farewell, father.*
> *Old M.* *God's benison* go with you and with those
> That would make *good* of *bad*, and *friends* of *foes.*"

The picture is thus filled with all periods, from the cradle to the grave, and gives a fuller representation of human life with its physiological changes of condition, as birth, growth, maturity, decline, and decay.

In treating of man physiologically, that is, as a state or constitution made up of body and mind, and their joint and several organs and faculties, Shakespeare has seen fit to introduce into his play much of "the knowledges that respect the body, and of the knowledges that respect the mind," laid down in Bacon's "Advancement of Learning," — a work that was published in 1605, probably in the month of October of that year. The play was produced between October, 1604, and April, 1610. It is possible that it was written before the publication of Bacon's book; but it is fair to infer from the coincidences between passages in the play, and in the "Advancement," that Shakespeare was acquainted with Bacon's doctrines. No doubt, Shakespeare, who, no less than Bacon, was a great student of Nature, may have

been led by his investigations to the same conclusions respecting "the state and nature of man" that were reached by the professed philosopher, and consequently may have produced the play without any knowledge of Bacon's work. And this supposition will, perhaps, be thought to derive support from the fact that there are striking coincidences between the play and Bacon's writings, with regard to somewhat abstruse and recondite points connected with the philosophy of "man" or "humanity," which did not appear in Bacon's works until the publication in 1623 — or seven years after Shakespeare's death — of the "De Augmentis," a Latin translation of the "Advancement" much enlarged. It may not be uninteresting to trace some of these parallelisms, as the means of throwing light upon the play, for, if it cannot be contended that the play was written to elucidate Bacon's philosophy, such philosophy may at least be used as a commentary on the play.

Though Shakespeare could have had access to the doctrines of Bacon only in their original form, as published in 1605, yet as these doctrines are given in the "De Augmentis" with greater fullness of thought and expression, and on some points with considerable additions, the citations will be made from the latter work. Where the "De Augmentis" introduces matter not contained in the "Advancement," it will be noted. The edition of Bacon made use of is that of Spedding, Ellis & Heath, republished at Boston, 1860–65.

In opening the subject of "the doctrine concerning man," Bacon says: "Let us now come to that knowledge whereunto the ancient oracle directs us, which is the *knowledge of ourselves;* which deserves the more accurate handling in proportion as it touches us more nearly. This knowledge is for man the end and term of knowledges. . . . . The doctrine concerning man has two parts. The one I call the Philosophy of Humanity, the other Civil Philosophy. Philosophy of Humanity consists of parts similar to those of which man consists; that is, of knowledges which respect the body, and of knowledges which respect the mind. But before we pursue the particular distributions let us constitute one general science concerning the *Nature* and *State of Man.* . . . . It is composed of those things which are common as well to the body as the soul; and may be divided into two parts: the one regarding the nature of man undivided, and the other regarding the bond and connection between the mind and body; the first whereof I will term the doctrine concerning the Person of Man, the second the doctrine concerning the League."[1]

"With regard to the doctrine concerning the league, or common bond between the soul and body, it is distributed into two parts. For as in all leagues and amities there is both mutual intelligence and mutual offices, so the description of this league of soul and body consists

[1] *De Augmentis*, book iv. chap. 1, vol. ix. pp. 14, 15.

in like manner of two parts; namely, how these two (that is, the soul and body) disclose the one the other, and how they work the one upon the other; by knowledge or indication, and by impression. The former of these (that is, the description of what knowledge of the mind may be obtained from the habit of the body, or of the body from the accidents of the mind) has begotten two *arts;* both of *prediction*. . . . The first is *physiognomy*, which discovers the dispositions of the mind by the lineaments of the body; the second is the interpretation of natural dreams, which discovers the state and disposition of the body by the agitations of the mind."

Under physiognomy, Bacon includes motion and gesture, "for the lineaments of the body disclose the dispositions and inclinations of the mind in general; but the motions and gestures of the countenance and parts do not only so, but disclose likewise the seasons of access, and the present humor and state of the mind and will."[1]

Now, as from the point of view taken in this play, prudence, or *foresight* is the faculty for the guidance of life, and as the movement of the plot originates in the *vaticinations* of the Witches, it is obvious that illustrations of physiognomy as an art of *prediction* are perfectly congruous with the whole scope of the play, and will contribute to its unity of effect.

A direct, though negative allusion to physiog-

[1] *De Augmentis*, vol. ix. pp. 18, 19.

nomy as an *art* is made by Duncan, who, speaking of the traitorous thane of Cawdor, says, —

> "There is *no art*
> To find the *mind's construction in the face.*"

Physiognomy is used with the strongest dramatic effect in the scene where a messenger, with a face pallid with fright, enters and announces the approach of the English force. Macbeth, who is puffed up with a vain confidence in the promises of the Weird Sisters, has just been vaunting that his mind can never "sag with doubt or shake with fear," but is at once thrown into fury by this indication of terror, and exclaims, —

> "The devil *damn thee black*, thou *cream-fac'd* loon!
> Where got'st thou that *goose look?*
> *Servant.* There is ten thousand —
> *Macbeth.* Geese, villain?
> *Serv.* Soldiers, sir.
> *Macb.* Go, prick *thy face* and *over-red thy fear*,
> Thou *lily-liver'd boy.* What soldiers, patch?
> Death of thy soul! those *linen cheeks* of thine
> Are *counsellors to fear.* What soldiers, *whey-face?*
> *Serv.* The English force, so please you.
> *Macb. Take thy face hence.*"

Another direct allusion to physiognomy is found in Lady Macbeth's counsel to her husband: —

> "Your *face*, my thane, is as a *book*, where *men*
> May *read strange matters:* to *beguile* the time,
> *Look like the time.*"

Physiognomy, again, is exemplified in the scene where Lady Macduff, whose fears have been

aroused by a warning of the near approach of danger to herself and children, is suddenly startled by the entrance of the murderers. Her exclamation, "*What are these faces?*" sets before us the villainous looks of the ruffians as well as her own unprotected condition, more powerfully than the most elaborate description could do.

There are several other examples in the play, which might be cited. Of gesture, as indicative of inward emotion, there is a fine instance in Macduff's demeanor on hearing of the murder of his wife and children: —

> "What, *man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows:*
> Give sorrow words," etc.

"The latter branch of the doctrine of the League (which I have termed Impression)," says Bacon, "has not yet been collected into an art, but only comes in sometimes dispersedly in the course of other treatises. It has the same relation or antistrophe that the former has. For the consideration is twofold: either how and how far the humors and temperament of the body alter and work upon the mind; or, again, how and how far the passions and apprehensions of the mind alter and work upon the body."[1]

Of this second part of the doctrine of impression, the play is, as indeed are all the plays, replete with illustrations. It includes all the effects that the mind works upon the body, or its organs, of

[1] *De Augmentis*, book iv. chap. 1, vol. ix. p. 20.

which the throbbing of the heart with desire, the stiffening of the hair, and the trembling of the nerves with fear, are common examples. But special instances, on an extraordinary scale, are here found in the influence of Macbeth's imagination over his senses, as in the vision of the dagger and of the ghost of Banquo, which are "false creations" proceeding from the brain, fevered, heated, and oppressed with the workings of the passions and imagination. But the crowning illustration of the influence of the mind over the body, is Lady Macbeth's somnambulism.

With regard to the first head of the doctrine of impression, — that is, how and how far the humors and temperaments of the body may alter and work upon the mind, — Bacon remarks, "For the physicians prescribe drugs to help mental diseases, as in the treatment of phrensy and melancholy," an allusion to which doctrine is found in the well-known passage, —

> "Can'st thou not minister to a *mind diseased*,
> . . . . . .
> And with *some sweet oblivious antidote*
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of the *perilous* [grief]
> That *weighs upon the heart?*"

And though the poet's purpose required that the doctrine be negatived, —

> "*Doctor.* Therein the patient
> Must minister to himself;"

still the allusion to that branch of the "doctrine concerning man," is no less marked.

The influence of drugs over the mind is noticed, too, in Banquo's question, —

> "Have we eaten on the *insane root*
> That takes the *reason prisoner?*"

Under this head, also, Bacon treats of diet, fastings, and macerations of the body as affecting the soul, and adds, "The Christian faith itself (although clear and serene from all clouds of ceremony) yet retains the use of fastings, abstinences, and other macerations and humiliations of the body, as things not merely ritual, but also profitable." [1]

This is also touched upon in the play: —

> "Revenges burn in them; for their dear causes
> Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
> Excite the *mortified man;*"

i. e. a devotee, or one who, by mortifying the flesh, has purified his mind from vindictive passions.

"Among those doctrines concerning the League, or the concordances between the mind and body, there is none more necessary than the inquiry concerning the proper seats and domiciles which the several faculties of the mind occupy in the body and its organs. . . . . For the opinion of Plato, who placed the understanding in the brain, as *in a castle;* animosity in the heart; and sensuality in the liver; deserves neither to be altogether despised nor to be eagerly received." [2]

[1] *De Augmentis*, book iv. chap. 1, vol. ix. p. 21. [2] *Ibid.* p. 22.

In the ordinary use of language, the names of the various organs express the functions or faculties that are attributed to them; and such use is particularly marked in this play. "My dull *brain* was wrought with *things forgotten*." "Who that had a *heart to love*, and in that *heart*, *courage* to make his love known," etc. The brain, moreover, is directly mentioned as the seat or receptacle of the reason, as when Lady Macbeth speaks of the chamberlains, whom, —

> "She will with wine and wassel so convince
> That memory, the *warder of the brain*,
> Shall be a fume, and the *receipt* [or receptacle] of *reason*
> A limbec only."

Having "constituted (as in his own wish and advice) the inquiry touching human nature entire, as a just portion of knowledge to be handled apart,"[1] Bacon proceeds to "the doctrine concerning the body of man," and health being the chief good of the body, he treats of medicine, as the corresponding knowledge or art. Having alluded to the honor which "accrues to medicine from the works of our Saviour, who was the physician both of soul and body; and as he made the soul the peculiar object of his heavenly doctrine, so he made the body the peculiar object of his miracles," Bacon treats of the "offices of medicine," and concludes with these words: "I receive the doctrine concerning the parts of the human body — the functions, humors, respiration,

[1] *Advancement*, vol. vi. p. 241.

sleep, generation, the fœtus, and gestation in the womb, growth, puberty, old age, and the like — into the body of medicine; . . . because the human body is in everything the subject of medicine."[1]

That is, he includes physiology under the head of medicine, and it has already been pointed out, in the analysis of the vocabulary and of the characters, that the functions and processes of life are largely illustrated in the play.

Bacon next takes up the doctrine concerning the soul; and after enumerating the different faculties of the soul, namely, "understanding, reason, imagination, memory, appetite, will, in short, all with which the logical and ethical sciences deal," he adds, "This part touching the faculties of the mind, has likewise two appendices: . . . . one of these is the doctrine of natural *Divination*, the other of *Fascination.*

"Divination hath been anciently and not unfitly divided into two parts: artificial and natural. Artificial makes *prediction* by *argument*, concluding upon *signs* and *tokens;* natural forms a presage from an inward *presentiment* of the mind, without the help of signs. Artificial is of two sorts: one *argues from causes,* the other only from experiments, by a kind of blind authority. Which latter is for the most part superstitious; such as were the heathen observations upon the

[1] *De Augmentis*, book iv. chap. 2, vol. ix. p. 47.

inspection of entrails, the *flights of birds*, and the like." [1]

Divination, which "argues from causes," is simply that foresight of the mind acquired by reasoning from cause to effect, and is exemplified in all the characters of this piece. It is marked even in the childish prattle of Macduff's boy:—

Lady Macduff. Now God help thee, poor monkey! but how wilt thou do for a father?

Boy. If he were dead, you'd weep for him; if you would not, it were a *good sign* that I *should quickly have a new father.*"

To the latter species of artificial divination, allusion is made in the following passage:—

"*Augurs* and *understood relations* have
By *magot-pies* and *choughs* and *rooks brought forth*
The *secret'st man of blood.*"

"Artificial divination of both kinds is dispersed among different knowledges. The astrologer has his predictions from the position of the stars. The physician likewise has his predictions of approaching death, of recovery, of coming symptoms of diseases, from the urine, the pulse, the look of the patient and the like." [2]

Thus we find in the play:—

"If thou could'st, Doctor, *cast*
The *water* of my land, find her *disease*,
And *purge* it to a *sound* and pristine *health*,
I would applaud thee," etc.

[1] *De Augmentis*, book iv. chap. 3, vol. ix. pp. 51, 52.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 52.

Observe that this last instance is hinted at in the "De Augmentis" only, the passage standing in the "Advancement" thus: "The physician hath his predictions of death, of recovery, of the accidents and issues of disease." [1]

"Natural divination, which springs from the inward power of the mind," says Bacon, "is of two sorts: the one primitive, the other by influxion. Primitive is grounded upon the supposition that the mind, when it is withdrawn and collected into itself, and not diffused into the organs of the body, has of its own essential power some prenotion of things to come. Now this appears most in sleep, in *ecstasies*," etc.[2]

A remarkable instance of this species of natural divination is given in Macbeth's vision, or second-sight of Duncan's murder. The prediction of the Witches throws him into a state of mind resembling, or analogous to, an *ecstasy*. Banquo thus describes him: —

> "My noble partner
> You greet with present grace and great prediction
> Of noble having and of royal hope,
> That he seems *rapt* withal."

And subsequently Banquo calls the attention of Rosse to Macbeth's trance-like state: "Look, how our partner's *rapt*." This, for poetical purposes, is sufficiently near to a state of ecstasy, and

[1] *Advancement*, book ii. vol. vi. p. 255.
[2] *De Augmentis*, book i. chap. 3, vol. ix. p. 52.

brings the passage into parallelism with the doctrine of Bacon: —

> "Why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose *horrid image* doth unfix my hair?
> . . . . . .
> My *thought*, whose *murther* yet is but *fantastical*,
> Shakes so my single state of man that *function*
> Is *smother'd in surmise*, and *nothing is*
> *But what is not.*"

"Divination by influxion is grounded upon this other conceit; that the mind, as a mirror or glass, receives a kind of secondary illumination from the *foreknowledge* of God and spirits." [1]

This is equivalent to a gift of prophecy through God's grace, and an allusion directly in point is furnished by the play: —

> "He hath a *heavenly gift of prophecy*,
> And *sundry blessings* hang about his throne
> That speak him *full of grace.*"

"Fascination is the power and act of imagination intensive upon the body of another." After speaking of the school of Paracelsus, Bacon continues, "Others, that draw nearer to probability, looking with a clearer eye at the secret workings and impressions of things, the irradiations of the senses, the passage of contagion from body to body, the conveyance of magnetic virtues, have concluded that it is much more probable there should be impressions, conveyances, and communications from spirit to spirit, whence have

[1] *De Augmentis*, book iv. chap. 3, vol. ix. p. 53.

arisen those conceits (now become as it were popular) of the mastering spirit, of the glances of love, envy, and the like." [1]

To this doctrine of a mastering spirit, allusion is made in the following lines: —

> "There is none but he
> Whose *being I do fear;* and under him
> My *genius is rebuk'd,* as, it is said,
> Mark Antony's was by Cæsar."

"With this is joined the inquiry," continues Bacon, "how to raise and fortify the imagination; for if the imagination fortified have so much power, it is worth while to know how to fortify and exalt it. And here comes in crookedly and dangerously a palliation and defense of a great part of ceremonial magic. For it may be speciously pretended that ceremonies, characters, charms, gesticulations, amulets and the like, do not derive their power from any tacit or sacramental contract with evil spirits, but serve only *to strengthen and exalt the imagination* of him who uses them." [2]

Illustrative of this, poetically treated, is the incantation scene, "the ceremonial magic" of which fortifies Macbeth's imagination in the hope and belief that he is secure from harm at mortal hands.

It will thus be perceived that the leading points of doctrine concerning man, laid down in the three chapters of the Fourth Book of the "De

[1] *De Augmentis*, book iv. chap. 3, vol. ix. pp. 53, 54.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 54.

Augmentis" (all of which are set forth, though more briefly, in the "Advancement," with the exception of "the doctrine concerning the person of man," not yet considered), are introduced by way of example or allusion into this tragedy. These points are: 1. Physiognomy. 2. The influence of the mind upon the body, as in somnambulism. 3. The influence of the body upon the mind, as the influence of drugs upon the mental affections, or the effect of diet and fasting upon the passions. 4. Medicine and physiology. 5. Artificial divination, which draws its predictions from signs, that is, foresight, or reasoning from causes to effects. 6. Artificial divination by augury or flight of birds. 7. The predictions of experts in their own art, instanced in those of the physician. 8. Natural divination through the mind's own power, or second-sight. 9. Natural divination by influx or the gift of prophecy. 10. Fascination, or the doctrine of the master-spirit. 11. Effects of ceremonial magic in fortifying the imagination.

These parallelisms might be pushed further by taking a wider range in Bacon's writings, and, indeed, without going out of the "De Augmentis." For instance, in this very third chapter of the Fourth Book, last quoted from, Bacon speaks of the doctrine of voluntary motion, and alludes to the fact that "the imagination is as it were the director and driver of this motion, insomuch that when the image which is the object of this motion,

is withdrawn, the motion itself is immediately interrupted and stopped, as in walking, if you begin to think eagerly and fixedly of something else, you immediately stand still," etc. Of this doctrine, there is no mention made in the "Advancement;" yet it receives a remarkable, though poetically exaggerated illustration in the air-drawn dagger that points Macbeth the way to the murder of the king: —

> "Thou *marshal'st* me *the way that I was going*,
> And *such* an *instrument* I was to use.
> . . . There's no such thing:
> It 's the *bloody business* which *informs*
> Thus to mine eyes."

So, too, the doctrine which Bacon lays down in the VII. Book of the "De Augmentis," as the ground of morality, namely, that there is in every creature an appetite to two natures of good, that is, "self-good" and "good of communion," calling respectively for the exercise of self-love and benevolence, is precisely that system of morality on which the whole play is founded.

The coincidences, above adduced, may not perhaps, when taken singly, be thought to have much weight; nor when taken together, would they be considered as proofs of more than a casual similarity of thought between two great minds, had the passages from Bacon been drawn from his works at large, and the corresponding passages from Shakespeare been selected from his plays indiscriminately; but inasmuch as the citations

from Bacon are taken consecutively from that portion of one of his works in which he treats of the branch of philosophy that has "the nature and state of man" for its subject, and deals with some of the most abstruse points of such doctrine; and as the parallel passages from Shakespeare are all from a single play, which also has "the nature and state of man" for its subject, and which illustrates with great splendor of imagination the most recondite points of the philosopher's science, the number of these coincidences entitles them to consideration, and justifies the conclusion that Shakespeare was acquainted with Bacon's book. This has a bearing upon the date of the play. It cannot gravely be contended that Bacon drew his philosophy from the play, for the "Advancement," which was published in 1605, was the result of years of study and meditation, and the play must have been written after 1604, as James I. was not proclaimed king of Great Britain and Ireland until that year, and in the play there is an allusion to the fact of the union of the kingdoms under him. Still, the supposition that Shakespeare had access to the "Advancement" before writing "Macbeth" will not account for some curious coincidences between passages in the play and certain points of doctrine in the philosophy of man, which did not appear in Bacon's writings until the publication of the "De Augmentis" in 1623, and which are hinted at in the "Advancement" only in the

most vague and general way. These points are those relative to what Bacon calls "the doctrine concerning the person of man." All that is said upon this in the "Advancement" is the following: "For I do take the consideration in general and at large of human nature, to be fit to be emancipate and made a knowledge by itself; not so much in regard of those delightful and elegant discourses which have been made of the *dignity* of man, of *his miseries*, of his *state and life*, and the like adjuncts of his common and undivided nature; but chiefly in regard of the knowledge concerning the *sympathies* and *concordances* between the mind and body, which being mixed cannot be properly assigned to the sciences of either."[1]

Out of these "concordances and sympathies," Bacon, in the "Advancement," forms "the doctrine of the League," of which physiognomy is a part, but says nothing of any doctrine appertaining to the "dignity of man or of his miseries." But in the "De Augmentis," he constitutes these into a distinct branch of the philosophy of man, which he calls "the doctrine concerning the person of man." "This," he says, "takes into consideration two subjects principally: the miseries of the human race and the prerogatives or excellences of the same." And by these latter, he means, "the ultimate and highest point which human nature has of itself attained in the several

[1] *Advancement*, vol. vi. p. 237.

gifts of body and mind." After enumerating instances of great powers of mind and memory, he turns to "the triumphs of the moral virtues," and cites a number of examples of great serenity and composure at the time of death, and, among others, introduces the anecdote of Sir Thomas More's behavior on the scaffold. "But my meaning," he says, "is sufficiently clear; namely, that the miracles of human nature, and its highest powers and virtues both in mind and body, should be collected into a volume, which should serve for a register of the triumphs of man."

Now, for this collection of "the miracles of human nature," which Bacon would form into a new branch of science, the play furnishes a dramatic instance in the death of Cawdor. And what renders more curious the coincidence between the play and this new philosophy, of which Shakespeare could have gained no hint from the "Advancement," is the fact that the description of the death of Cawdor is immediately followed by an express allusion to physiognomy as an art, a consideration of which art also immediately follows the examples of human excellences in Bacon's "De Augmentis."

"*Duncan.* Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?
Malcolm. My liege,
They are not yet come back; but I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treason,
Implored your Highness' pardon, and set forth

A deep repentance. *Nothing in his life*
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd
As 'twere a careless trifle.
Dun. There's *no art*
To find the *mind's construction in the face;*
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust."

This is said by the commentators to refer to the behavior of the Earl of Essex on the scaffold. It may be so; and the example of Essex is one of those, perhaps, which Bacon would place in his "register of human triumphs."

Of the miseries and frailties of man, there is no want of examples in this tragedy of horrors. But of bodily wretchedness, "the strangely visited people, all swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye," who are supplicants for the holy Edward's healing touch, are instances particularly pointed; and of the influence of misery to deprave the mind and moral health by destroying hope, the murderers are special examples: —

"2 *Murd.* I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile *blows and buffets* of *the world*
Have *so incensed*, that I am *reckless* what
I do to *spite the world.*
1 *Murd.* And I another,
So *weary* with *disasters, tugg'd* with *fortune,*
That I would *set my life* on any chance
To *mend it* or *be rid on't.*"

The foregoing passages, descriptive of the death of Cawdor, and of "the crew of wretched souls,

that stay the cure" of the royal touch, are certainly very apposite examples of the excellences and miseries of the human race, which Bacon constitutes into one branch of the philosophy of man; but that these formed parts of the philosopher's system, Shakespeare could have had no knowledge at the time the play was written. It may, therefore, be argued that if the poet's all-fathoming intellect seized upon some parts of this doctrine without aid from Bacon's science, he also produced the whole play, with its special allusions to physiognomy, and divination, and fascination, and voluntary motion, and the reciprocal influences of body and mind, without suggestions from even such parts of the philosopher's well-digested system as were within his reach. If this be true, it presents one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of the human mind. It makes necessary the conclusion, that two men, living contemporaneously in the same town, then a comparatively small city, — one a philosopher, endowed with a most brilliant imagination, the other a most imaginative poet, possessing the profoundest philosophical genius, and both reckoned among the greatest thinkers that the world ever saw, — did, at the same time, and possibly in the same year, and certainly at the same period of their lives, write, without any interchange of views or opinions, upon the same identical subject, follow the same train of thought, arrive at the same conclusions, and digest the re-

sults of their study, reading, and meditation, into the same system or body of philosophy, the which one stated to the world in abstract scientific proportions, while the other embodied it in poetic forms and dramatic creation. No coincidence of mental action so remarkable as this can be found, it is believed, in any other age of the world, however prolific of genius.

In conception and execution, this blood-boltered tragedy is a splendid illustration of that æsthetic principle which requires that the artist idealize his subject just in proportion as it is horrible or painful, or calculated to awaken painful emotions in case the illusion should be allowed to become too strong. All works of true art observe the nicest balance between the strength of the illusion and the simultaneous perception of the unreal. It is from this balance that the pleasure derived from art seems to spring. The perception of the likeness implies a sense of the difference; illusion coexists with the consciousness that it is illusion. And in order that this double recognition may take place, the poet, as he awakens the sympathies of the spectator or reader, by the portrayal of scenes which, if real, would excite horror, renders his picture more imaginative, and excites a greater mental activity, by the use of a higher and more artificial style, a rhythm more musical and measured, and further removed from the style of ordinary life, a bolder and more profuse display of fancy in metaphor or imagery;

or he magnifies the proportions of his characters, and gives them an unnatural elevation ; or by the use of the marvelous and supernatural he transports his scene beyond the limits of ordinary experience, and appeals at once to the imagination. In this tragedy, therefore, in which are idealized the horrors of a midnight murder, and which drips throughout with blood, Shakespeare lifts his piece at the very outset into the domain of the imagination, by the introduction of the supernatural. By the impersonation of the elements of wickedness and revolt in the Weird Sisters, he is true to his philosophic idea, answers the æsthetic requirements of the subject, and at the same time, insures a popularity for his play by writing square up to the prevalent superstitions of his time. At the period " Macbeth " was produced, a belief in witchcraft was the fashion at court, and was, of course, generally diffused among the people. In the creation of the Weird Sisters, therefore, he lays a foundation of the character in the common village witch, but strips the delineation of all vulgarity, by superadding thereto a magic potent over the soul of man. To fiendish malice and treachery, he unites what is most discordant and repulsive in habit and appearance, together with the chant, the spell, and the hell-broth, — from the fumes of which emanate the *effigies* of future events, the fiend thus juggling with the truth the better to fascinate both eye and imagination, — and fusing the whole into unity, the poet raises

the mischievous hags of the village, whose chief delight is in killing swine or vexing the seaman's boat, into the dark, deadly, abnormal Weird Sisters, equivocal in sex and ambiguous in language, dwellers in cloud and storm, agents of confusion, suggesters of evil, instigators of revolt, tempters of the will, and the fates of all that trust them, to their eternal woe.

From the burden of their first chant, —

"*Fair is foul* and *foul is fair*,"

which echoes the doubleness and inward contradiction inherent in all evil and revolt, and is the key-note of the piece, we have a presentiment of the direful effects that must follow their malignant influences. In their withered and thunder-scathed forms, they embody the real nature of the bright hopes and flattering promises of happiness, by which the will is allured to evil. In the language of the Porter, "they point the primrose way to the everlasting bon-fire," and hold in this ideal picture of society the same relation to man that the Devil does in Christian theology.

Another mode by which the horrors of the play are beautified and made pleasurable, is, — as has been pointed out by Mr. Knight, — by endowing Macbeth with a redundant activity of imagination. And here again the poet, with profound skill, meets both the requirements of art and of philosophic truth. For, by drawing Macbeth with so vivid an imagination, he more fully develops

the character, renders it a fit vehicle for the exemplification of singular mental phenomena and physiological principles pertaining to the constitution of man, and, at the same time, touches with grace and light its moral blackness. Macbeth's poetic sensibility always leads him to look upon the most picturesque side of things, and he reconciles us in some measure to the intrinsic selfishness of his sentiments by the pathos and beauty with which he gives them utterance. As the character, at bottom, represents the unmitigated evil which lurks in inordinate self-love and self-will, the dramatist is careful to break the force of our perceptions of it; otherwise it would excite too strong a detestation. This he does in several ways: —

First, by representing him in scenes where his corruption concurring with his loyalty gains our sympathies and admiration wholly.

Secondly, by causing him to appear to act under the instigation of the Weird Sisters.

Thirdly, by his being driven into the murder of the king by his wife, which seems in some measure to excuse him.

And fourthly, by endowing him with a most lively and impressible fancy, which piles metaphor on metaphor, and covers the naked and hideous selfishness of his character with a garb of poetry.

So luxuriant is Macbeth's fancy, that he habitually falls into tautology of expression, which at

times imparts a pathos to his sentiments by mere amplification of the thought. An instance of this is found in the familiar lines, —

> " Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased ;
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of the perilous [grief]
> That weighs upon the heart ? "

This reiteration of the thought under richly varied figures and forms of expression renders it uncommonly sweet and sympathetic; and the effect of this is greatly heightened by his sudden transition to the most concise and dramatic phraseology, —

> " Throw physic to the dogs ! I'll none of it."

These transitions are indicative of a hasty and violent temper, and thus are true to the psychology of the character; they also give to his manner of expression a doubleness that is congruous with the incessant inter-action in his mind of reason and imagination, fear and hope. A remarkable instance of this contrast of style is found in his address to the air-drawn dagger, which is couched throughout in perfectly plain and almost prosaic language. His imagination is wholly occupied by the phantom of the dagger, which usurps possession of his mind, leaving no room for the play of the associative faculty; but as soon as the vision disappears and his mind resumes its usual action, both imagination and

fancy, excited by the horror of the time, voluntarily summon up a crowd of images, and overload his speech with trope and metaphor.

As in "Macbeth" man is shown in relation to society, towards which his will must take form in external acts, a certain outwardness or objectivity is given to the whole representation. Even the functions of the mind are painted as external phenomena. Thus Lady Macbeth acts her dreams, and Macbeth projects his mind in phantoms that have for him a visible reality. The impersonation of man's wickedness in the Weird Sisters is another instance of objectivity given to what is properly inward and subjective. The aspects of the external world are kept before us by frequent mention of natural objects, of rise and setting of sun and moon, of storm and tempest, of wild animals belonging to distant climes, and particularly of birds whose flight is associated with free space. The description of Macbeth's castle is celebrated for the contrast it presents between the quietude of the external world and the tumultuous passions of its inmates; but, observe its objectivity, its outwardness; and furthermore how true it is in all its features to the organic idea. It turns upon the *salubrity* of its site, and introduces the notions of *hospitality* and *generation* in its allusion to the birds, "the *guests* of summer," that build and breed among the angles and recesses of its lofty turrets: —

"*Duncan.* This *castle* hath a *pleasant seat;* the air
Nimbly and sweetly *recommends itself*
Unto our *gentle* senses.
Banquo. This *guest* of *summer*,
The *temple*-haunting martlet, does *approve*
By his *loved mansionry*, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here; no *jutty*, *frieze*,
Buttress, nor *coign* of *vantage*, but the bird
Hath made his pendent *bed* and *procreant* cradle:
Where they most *breed* and haunt, I have observ'd,
The air is *delicate*."

By an allusion to the aspect of the external world Shakespeare imparts a touch of imagination to even so low a character as a murderer, and brings into direct juxtaposition the notions of hospitality and murder, — a contrast observable in the main incidents of the piece.

One of the murderers lying in ambush for Banquo, says: —

"The *west still glimmers with some streaks of day.*
Now *spurs the lated traveller apace*
To gain the *timely inn.* And *near approaches*
The *subject of our watch.*"

As an example of the method by which the diction is governed by the organic idea, parts of the banquet scene will be quoted. It will be seen that it is filled with physiological allusions, and with terms affined in meaning with State, weal, health, manhood, etc., and their opposites: —

"*Macbeth.* You know your own *degrees*, *sit down; at first*
And *last*, the *hearty welcome.*
Lords. *Thanks* to your majesty.

Macb. Ourself will mingle with *society*,
And play the humble *host*.
Our *hostess* keeps her *state*, but in best time
We will require her *welcome*.

Lady M. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our *friends*;
For my *heart* speaks, they are *welcome*.

. . . . . .

Murd. Most royal sir,
Fleance is *'scaped*.

Macb. Then comes my *fit* again; I had else been *perfect*,
Whole as the marble, *founded* as the rock;
As broad and *general* as the casing air:
But now, I am *cabin'd*, *cribb'd*, *confin'd*, *bound in*
To saucy *doubts* and *fears*. But Banquo's *safe?*

Murd. Aye, my good lord: *safe* in a ditch he *bides*,
With twenty *trenched gashes* on his head,
The least a *death* to *nature*.

Macb. *Thanks* for that:
There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's *fled*,
Hath *nature* that in time will venom *breed*,
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone; to-morrow
We 'll hear, ourselves, again. [*Exit Murderer.*

Lady M. My royal lord,
You do not give the *cheer*: the *feast* is *sold*
That is not often *vouch'd*, while 'tis a making,
'Tis given with *welcome*: To *feed*, were best at home;
From thence, the *sauce to meat* is *ceremony*;
Meeting were bare without it.

Macb. Sweet remembrancer!—
Now, *good digestion wait* on *appetite*,
And *health* on both!"

. . . . . .

Macb. Give me some wine, *fill full*;
I *drink* to the *general joy* of the *whole table*,
And to our *dear friend* Banquo, whom we *miss*;
Would he were here! to *all*, *and him*, we *thirst*,
And *all to all*.

Lords. Our *duties* and the *pledge.*
Macb. *Avaunt!* and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy *bones are marrowless*, thy *blood* is *cold;*
Thou hast no *speculation* in those eyes
Which thou dost *glare* with!
Lady M. Think of this, *good peers,*
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it *spoils* the *pleasure* of the time.
Macb. What *man dare, I dare:*
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any *shape* but that, and my *firm nerves*
Shall never *tremble*: or be *alive* again,
And *dare* me to the desert with thy sword;
If *trembling* I inhabit then, protest me
The *baby* of a *girl.* Hence, *horrible shadow!*
Unreal mockery, hence! — Why, so; — being gone,
I am *a man* again. Pray you, *sit still.*
Lady M. You have *displac'd* the *mirth, broke* the *good meeting,*
With most *admir'd disorder.*
Macb. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud
Without our special wonder? You make me *strange*
Even to the *disposition* that I owe,
When now I think you can *behold* such *sights,*
And keep the *natural ruby* of *your cheeks,*
When mine are *blanch'd* with *fear.*
Rosse. What *sights*, my lord?
Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him: at once, *good night:*
Stand not upon the *order* of your going,
But go at once.
Lenox. *Good night*, and *better health*
Attend his majesty!
Lady M. A *kind good night* to all!"

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